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Military Raids and Closes BZU

The Israeli military in the occupied West Bank closed Bir Zeit University March 1 for one week, following a midnight raid of the new and old campuses. The raid occurred one day before a scheduled book fair and festival celebrating the 16th anniversary of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Heavy damage from the raid was reported. The military raided student dormitories and arrested 53 students. Most of the students were later released. Eight, four of whom are Bir Zeit students and the others guests, are currently being held in Fara'a prison in Nablus without charge.

The Bir Zeit campuses were declared closed military areas immediately after the raids. None of the students or university employees were allowed past a checkpost set up on the main road leading to the village just outside Ramallah. Only Bir Zeit village residents were allowed to pass. The military closed the university for one week March 3, pending another government decision regarding its status. The military alleged that "illegal literature" was found on campus, which prompted its closure.

A BZU press release issued March 4 denied the military allegations. It said the raid and "media blitz, orchestrated by the military authorities... are illegal and dishonest attempts to slander and incite against the university and perhaps to prepare the ground for harsher measures."

The statement explained that "the army's method of searching the campus was illegal and ensured that no accurate account of materials seized could be produced." It added that "the army raided the book exhibit in the new campus Engineering Building without the accompaniment of any university official," which means the university cannot be "responsible for materials allegedly seized from this exhibit." The release stressed that "no materials related to the preparation of Molotov cocktails or other explosive devices were present at this exhibit," as the military had claimed.

The university's board of trustees issued a statement March 2 criticising the army's raid and calling it "a new link in a series of recurrent infringements on academic freedom which aim at obstructing university education and development of the Palestinian Arab society."

An Israeli soldier allows only Bir Zeit residents to enter the town after the military closed the university for a week /AFP photo.

The one-week closure comes at the end of the first semester, causing "disruption of the academic schedule, interruption of laboratory experiments, and costly delay of the building programme," the press release said.

After Grenade Attack
Army Raids Sa'ir

After a grenade was thrown at an Israeli border police unit patrolling the streets of Sa'ir village near Hebron March 3, large numbers of soldiers raided the West Bank village arresting 150 residents, inflicting injuries, and smashing windows and furniture in private homes. A 24-hour curfew on the village was declared shortly after the grenade was thrown.

The Israeli daily *Hadashot* quoted Sa'ir residents as saying that the "security forces behaved in a ruthless manner, carrying out violent house-to-house searches." *Hadashot* also reported that "all the men in the village were gathered in the village square." *Hadashot* reported that three injured residents were transferred to Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem.

The injured told journalists that the soldiers beat them with clubs and gunbutts. They said residents were forced to run two kilometres while soldiers spat and cursed at them.

The injured include: Nathmi Shalaldeh, who has a broken left arm and bruises on his body; Adel Khalifeh, who has a broken right arm and bruises; and Diab and Naim Shalaldeh, who were bruised all over their bodies, particularly on the back.

Hadashot also reported that Israeli army sources reject allegations of unwarranted use of force. According to them, one of the residents refused to allow the soldiers to enter his home and when they burst in two youths in the house sustained light injuries.

The Jerusalem Post said that "an undisclosed number of residents were detained." Local residents say 150 villagers were transferred to the Fara'a detention centre near Nablus.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the general command of *Al Asifa* (Fatah dissidents) claimed responsibility for the grenade attack.

Israel Radio announced that two Israeli soldiers were injured by the grenade. Earlier reports said none were hurt. (Translation: Hadashot, HaAretz, March 6, 1985).

Nathmi Shalaldeh from Sa'ir lying in Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem after the Israeli army's attack on the village March 5./AO photo.

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Israel Clamps 'Iron Fist' On South Lebanon

French soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) hold off the crowd after a blast killed twelve people and injured 34 in the *husseiniya* of Ma'araka village, east of Tyre. Mohammed Sa'ad, a leader of resistance attacks against Israeli occupying forces, was among the dead./AFP photo.

The Israeli government approved the second phase of its troop withdrawal from Lebanon on March 3 while enforcing its "iron fist" policy in Shi'ite villages in the occupied south. Lebanese resistance continued to strike Israeli targets.

The cabinet voted to pull its army out of the Beqa' Valley and away from Syrian lines by early summer, when they plan to station their forces at the Litani River.

Israeli soldiers continued to raid and search Lebanon's southern villages this week. A large army force stormed the Shi'ite village of Ma'araka, east of Tyre, March 2, killing one person, arresting many others, and destroying three homes. More than 800 army personnel using three tanks, 50 armoured personnel carriers and 30 other vehicles took part in the raid, which was carried out under the supervision of the Israeli northern army commander, Ori Orr. The soldiers claim to have discovered weapons during the raid.

Shi'ite Amal leader Nabih Berri said in Beirut that his militias will attack northern Israeli settlements if the Israeli army continues to attack Lebanese villages. He warned that Shi'ite forces will hit an Israeli settlement for every Lebanese village raided.

A bomb exploded atop a mosque in Ma'araka the day after the Israeli raid killing 12 people and wounding 34 others. Among the dead were two Shi'ite leaders: Mohammed Sa'ad and Khalil Jeradi. Both are known to have strongly opposed the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon and are believed to have led the resistance against the occupiers. A noted Tyre physician, Khalil Atwi, and the head of the government-run social relief agency in Tyre, Ahmad Rouhiyeh, were also among the dead.

Villagers told foreign reporters that a meeting was underway in the mosque at the time to discuss distribution of relief supplies to the village in the wake of the Israeli army raid. They, and other Lebanese leaders in Beirut, accused the Israelis of planting the bomb during the raid. "The army would not have overlooked anything so conspicuous as an explosives charge in its search of the mosque," one villager said.

The Israeli army threw a 24-hour blockade around the village before and after the raid. The villagers burned tyres in the streets to block Israeli army entry. Foreign correspondents in the area reported hearing volleys of automatic weapons fire and explosions.

Tyre has reportedly has been under siege for two weeks and food supplies are decreasing.

In spite of the continuous raids on Shi'ite villages believed to be strongholds of anti-Israeli Lebanese resistance, attacks on Israeli posts and their Lebanese agents were noticeably high last week. Some of the attacks occurred near villages already raided. Four Israeli soldiers were wounded March 1 in two separate attacks in south Lebanon. One soldier was wounded when a roadside bomb was detonated by remote control as his patrol passed the Palestinian Burj al-Shamali refugee camp. The other three were wounded when two roadside bombs went off near Abbasiya, northeast of Tyre. Two other attacks were reported on the same day against Israeli forces but no one was hurt, Israel Radio said. Katyusha, rocket-propelled grenade and light arms attacks were reported throughout the week against Israeli posts in southern Lebanon. Most of the attacks were concentrated in the Nabatiyeh, Kasemiya, Bidiyas, Jouya and Tyre areas. Eight attacks were reported on March 4 alone. No reports of injuries were given. A Shi'ite Amal leader in Ma'arka told the *Associated Press* March 5 that there were an average of 10 attacks against Israeli forces a day, and that this will increase.

Israel continued to use the "iron fist" policy to root out Lebanese resisters in the south. Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Lebanese that "either we both live together in peace, or you won't have any peace." Rabin said this during a meeting with residents of the northern Metulla area March 4. Trade and Industry Minister Ariel Sharon urged the cabinet to keep a 30-kilometre defence line inside Lebanon to ensure that Israeli settlements in the north are not attacked again after a final Israeli withdrawal. Vice Premier Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir told Herut Party members March 5 that the current "iron fist" policy in Lebanon is the "most suitable one for protecting our soldiers and probably also for protecting our northern population.

Asqalan Prisoners Go On Hunger Strike

More than 400 Palestinian political prisoners with long-term sentences in Asqalan prison started a partial hunger strike February 22 to protest overcrowding, lack of treatment for the mentally ill, and other poor conditions. Prisoners at Jnaid prison near Nablus also began a hunger strike March 5 in solidarity with Asqalan, as did interns at Nafha prison in the Naqab. Nafha prisoners are reportedly on a partial hunger strike, taking only one meal day.

Families of prisoners also announced solidarity strikes in some parts of the West Bank and Gaza last week.

The strike began after the prison director refused to meet a delegation of prison representatives who intended to give him a list of their complaints. Lawyer Lea Tsemel, who visited the prison March 3 with Lawyer Mohammed Na'amneh, told *Al Fajr* prisoners have stopped eating cooked food, vegetables or fruits. They only take bread and tea, she said. She explained that prisoners are taking the bread and tea to demonstrate willingness to negotiate their demands with prison officials. The prisoners' committee has said that if the prison director does not agree to discuss their complaints, they will stop the bread and tea, she added.

The primary cause for the prisoners' strike, according to committee member Khaled Tantash, who is serving a life sentence, is the officials' refusal to send several mentally ill prisoners for treatment. Tsemel said that at least four prisoners, most of whom have been jailed for a long time, are considered the most serious cases. Mustafa Abu Jiab, Salman Obeidat, and Mohammed Farid Matar, all of whom have served 15 years of their life terms, and Mohammed Mahmoudal-Azzeh have reportedly become severely mentally unbalanced.

Prisoners also complained about the latest transfers from Beer Sheba prison, which has been converted into a criminal prison. A number of political prisoners from Asqalan prison were then transferred to Jnaid. Tsemel quoted Tantash as saying that prison conditions have deteriorated to the level of 1967. Prisoners are living in overcrowded rooms, he said. Israeli guards, who conduct almost daily searches, have confiscated personal belongings, including most of the prisoners' books and personal notebooks. Some of these have not been returned, even though they were seized several months ago, Tsemel reported Tantash as saying. Even articles translated from the Hebrew press were seized, the lawyer said.

In their list of demands, prisoners also cited overcrowding in the cells as one of the most pressing problems. Sixteen people are housed together in one small cell. They have also long been demanding that the solid iron cell doors be changed to iron bar doors to improve ventilation and although officials have repeatedly promised to make this switch, nothing has been done.

Furthermore, prisoners demanded both cold and hot running water. They complained that water supplies are frequently cut off, sometimes for days, and they rarely have hot water for bathing. Lawyer Lea Tsemel said

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Hakawati Appeals Gaza Ghetto Ban to High Court

El-Hakawati Theatre filed a petition with the Israeli High Court March 6 demanding a reversal of a censor's order banning the Swedish documentary film *Gaza Ghetto* for local viewing.

The petition, filed by Tel Aviv lawyer Avigdor Feldman, followed the March 4 refusal of the Israeli censorship board for films and plays to consider an appeal of their earlier decision.

The petition to the High Court states that the censorship decision infringes on the freedom of speech and expression. Feldman wrote to the High Court that by banning the film, the authorities also infringed on the general public's "right to know." The civil rights lawyer said that the film expresses the point of view of the Palestinian refugees, a perspective that is seldom portrayed in the Israeli media.

Feldman also argued that earlier Israeli High Court decisions have ruled that a documentary film doesn't have to be "balanced." He said that although the film is strong in its message and sympathises with the suffering of Palestinians, it doesn't violate the law or incite people to break the law.

The Israeli board of censorship banned the film February 6 on the pretext that the film contained "forged facts" and "calls to join the PLO."

Gaza Ghetto, an 80-minute film directed by noted Swedish film documentarian Pea Holmquist, with Joan Mandell and Pierre Bjorklund, describes the life of a Palestinian refugee family between 1948-1984. The film was produced with grants from several Swedish institutes and will be shown on Swedish TV April 5.

Issawiyeh Homes Demolished

Two large Issawiyeh families lost their newly constructed homes March 4 when municipality workers aided by scores of Israeli border police demolished them on the pretext that the houses where constructed without a license "on a green open area."

Eyewitnesses told *Al Fajr* that over 80 Israeli border police entered the village from a back road in the early morning hours, closed off the area leading to the two houses, and bulldozed them. Witnesses also reported incidents of physical and verbal abuse by the Israelis in this small northeastern Jerusalem village.

Houseowners Munir 'Aleyan and Nimr Mahmoud, together supporting a total of 26 dependents, had applied for construction permits several years ago but were refused permission. They appealed the municipality decision in court but were not successful. Mahmoud said, "I then decided to go ahead and build my house, regardless of Israeli approval."

The two men, who received demolition orders February 3, charge that municipality officials led them to believe the order would not be carried out. The men had met with the Jerusalem municipality's advisor on Arab affairs, Amir Hashin, and told him they had applied to the police for a permit to demonstrate outside his office and they intended to attract media attention to their cases. According to Mahmoud, Hashin then told them not to worry, their houses would not be demolished.

Hashin denied the charges, saying to *Al Fajr* that he told the men to "wait, and not to do anything yet." The demolition took place on the last day of the 30-day order.

According to Hashin, there is no approved zoning plan for Issawiyeh village but the municipality based its decision on a newly drafted but as yet unapproved plan. The new plan shows 'Aleyan's house to be located in a non-residential area outside Issawiyeh and Mahmoud's in a "green area" (farmland). "The two men had no right to build in these areas," Hashin said, "but since this is a free country they are entitled to appeal the zoning plan once it is approved by the municipality council."

Eyewitnesses present during the demolition told *Al Fajr* that Israeli border police "were extremely abusive as they prevented residents from getting near the demolition site. Police called us "dogs and bastards" and threatened to use their machine guns if we disrupted the proceedings," the houseowners told *Al Fajr*.

'Aleyan's wife had a nervous breakdown as she watched the destruction of her home. She was transferred to Maqassed Hospital for treatment.

'Aleyan's family had already lost hundreds of dunums to the nearby Givat Tzarfatit (French Hill) apartment complex constructed on confiscated Issawiyeh land. He said that his financial situation will force him now to depend on relatives for accommodation. 'Aleyan is an employee at the Spanish Consulate in Jerusalem.

Mahmoud and his 16 dependents will be staying at his brother's house until they can find a place to live.

Students Clash at Islamic University

At least eight students were injured March 5 at the Islamic University in Gaza during a clash between nationalist and Muslim fundamentalist student factions.

Nationalist student sources say that members of the Muslim fundamentalist student council went on a rampage, pulling students out from classes while wielding swords, chains and sticks. Eight wounded students are being treated at Gaza's Ahli and Shifa Hospitals. Others were seen by the university doctor. The Israelis have arrested 20 students in connection with the clashes. The board of trustees suspended studies on March 6 in hopes of cooling tempers.

Al Fajr Arabic daily reported March 6 that Gaza residents and parents of students have demanded an investigation into the clashes. According to *Al Fajr*, the parents also asked that the present student council be suspended and the perpetrators of the attack be punished.

The Student Youth Movement at the Islamic University and the Federation of Student Movements issued separate statements March 7 denouncing the attacks and blaming them on "those who hide behind religion." The attackers took advantage of the "present situation of the Palestinian revolution" to carry out their deeds, the statements said, and the latest attack is part of a series against the "student movement and university employees."

Najah U. Students Get Town Arrest Orders

Two students from Najah University in Nablus were placed under town arrest March 1 for six months, renewable at the end of the term.

Adnan Milhem, from the town of Anabta, was reportedly placed under town arrest because of his activities as acting chairperson of the student council. Milhem made a speech as student representative during graduation ceremonies in January. He received a BA degree in history in January and was planning to continue with graduate studies at Najah.

The other student who was placed under town arrest is Ahmad Salhoub, from the village of Dura in the Hebron district. It is not yet known why he was placed under town arrest, as such orders never specify reasons. Salhoub is a fourth year student in political science. The town arrest means the two students are forbidden to leave their villages without a special permit from the military governor.

Town arrest orders were also renewed last week on four prominent West Bank Palestinians. Faisal Husseini, head of the Jerusalem-based Arab Studies Centre, had his six-month order renewed for the seventh consecutive time. The order requires him to remain within Jerusalem city limits during the day and at his home from dusk to dawn. He also has to report to the police station every morning to confirm his presence in the city. The other three are: George Hazboun, former Bethlehem deputy mayor; Khalil Abu Zayyad, an activist among families of Palestinian political prisoners who served a 10-year prison term himself; and Jamil Othman Nasser, former head of the Union of Striking Lawyers in the West Bank. Both Nasser and Zayyad are from Bethany. Nasser's order was renewed for the fifth time, Zayyad's for the seventh, and Hazboun for the second time.

IN HONOUR OF MARCH 8:

Women's Work Committees Hold Their Sixth Annual Bazaar

Haidar Abd al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Gaza, listens to Zahera Kamal, Chairwomen of the Women's Work Commitees' Executive Board, after he opened the WWC Bazaar March 3 on the occasion of March 8, International Women's Day.

The bazaar, which went on daily from 9:00 to 5:00 through March 7, exhibited and offered for sale Palestinian embroidery, knitting and other handmade crafts produced by WWC members at local committee centres all over the occupied territories.

Thousands of Palestinians and their friends visited the bazaar and many of the exhibited items were sold. Proceeds will defray expenses of the 16 kindergartens and two nurseries run by the WWC in the West Bank and Gaza.

Vol. Work Committee Issues Annual Report

The Voluntary Work Committee (VWC) concentrated its efforts last year on cultivating land and planting it with thousands of olive seedlings, a report by the Voluntary Work Higher Committee said.

The VWC held its second annual conference March 1 to discuss the previous year's programme and to draw up a plan for the new year. According to the report submitted at the conference, the committee cultivated 19,000 dunums of land as part of a programme to assist local farmers and planted 37,000 olive seedlings in 118 lots to benefit 600 farmers. Thousands of other seedlings of different trees were also planted at different locations in the occupied territories, it added.

Members of the Voluntary Committee also assisted farmers in harvesting olives, citrus and watermelon. They picked olives from 90 villages, 474 tons of watermelon from the Jordan Valley area, and citrus from the Qalqilya and Gaza districts, according to the annual report.

The conference decided to set up seven work camps to assist farmers in the coming year. It also decided to continue providing olive seedlings to the farmers at cheaper than market prices and to organise youth work camps throughout the occupied territories.

Arab Council Strike Forces Government to Pay Up

An open strike called February 28 by 52 local Arab councils inside the "green line" was stopped March 5 after the Israeli Interior Ministry promised to cover the Arab municipal budget deficits totalling IS1.4 billion.

The promise was made during a meeting in Jerusalem March 4 between representatives of the Regional Committee of Heads of Local Arab Councils and the director of the Interior Ministry, Haim Kobarski. After the committee representatives informed the other committee members of the promise, they decided to call off the strike.

The crisis, however, is only temporarily resolved with the release of the IS1.4 billion. According to Ziad Fahoum, spokesperson of Nazareth municipality, the largest of the Arab councils in Israel, the problem is more fundamental. Fahoum said that unless a radical change is made in the general budget policy for Arab councils, the problem will resurface soon. He was referring to the fact that the Arab councils have never received funding equal to their Israeli counterparts; currently they receive what amounts to less than one-third of the budget allocated to Israeli municipalities. Fahoum also criticised the attitude of the Israeli interior and finance ministers towards Arabs; they deliberately put obstacles in the way of Arab urban development.

The recent budget shortages in the Arab councils forced many to cancel development projects in their towns and villages, and they were barely able to pay their employees. Nazareth municipal employees received their January salaries only in the last week of February.

Ibrahim Nimr Hussein, head of the regional committee and Mayor of Shafa 'Amr, told the Haifa-based *Al Ittihad* Arabic daily March 5 that the Arab councils were forced to go on strike because it was the only way they could obtain their rights. The paper quoted Nimr Murqus, the committee's deputy head and head of Kufr Yasif's local council, as saying that the recent development was a victory for the united stand of the Arab councils. Murqus denied allegations by the Israeli northern district commissioner, Israel Koenig, that the Arab councils' financial crisis was due to bad management.

'Art Against Occupation' Comes to Hakawati

About 300 Jerusalemites and visitors packed the Nuzha/El-Hakawati gallery to attend the Jerusalem opening of an Israeli-Palestinian art exhibit March 2. Under the theme "Against Occupation and for Freedom of Expression," the joint exhibit was sponsored by the Bir Zeit Solidarity Committee in cooperation with individual Israeli artists and the Palestinian Artists League.

Suleiman Mansour, vice-president of the Palestinian Artists' League, opened with a welcome to Israeli artists who are exhibiting their work in the occupied territories for the first time. Mansour told the audience of the unsuccessful experiment with an Israeli art gallery in Haifa back in 1981. He explained that the Israeli gallery refused to call the artists "Palestinian." "They wanted to call us Arab artists from Judea and Samaria," he said. But Mansour indicated that this time the artists did not have to worry about political wrangling, as the slogan under which the artists agreed to exhibit "speaks for itself." Mansour ended his remarks on a political note, explaining that the Middle East conflict cannot be solved by occupation and oppression but rather by granting the Palestinian people their legitimate rights.

Speaking on behalf of the Israeli participants, Israeli artist David Reeb noted that the exhibit is exemplary of the kind of cooperation possible between both sides when there is respect for the Palestinian people and their culture. Reeb called for more cooperation in the form of future exhibits and artistic workshops. He also attacked the Israeli government policy in south Lebanon and the occupied territories. Speaking for himself personally, Reeb expressed a wish that the future exhibit in El-Hakawati's gallery would take place in a Palestinian state.

Oriel Kitron, who spoke on behalf of the Bir Zeit Solidarity Committee, told the audience that the exhibit comes at a time when the Israeli occupation authorities are harassing, among others, Bir Zeit University, painter Fathi Ghabin and El-Hakawati Theatre.

Palestinian artist Taysir Barakat described the exhibit as "very successful," adding that he hoped it could be taken to West Bank and Gaza halls.

The exhibit, which has been seen in Tel-Aviv, Nazareth and the Galilee village of al-Rameh, is expected to continue in Jerusalem till March 14. It will open in Haifa on March 16.

Crowds of visitors flooded the El-Hakawati Theatre art gallery this week to view the "Art Against Occupation" exhibit./AO photo

*** BACH ORGAN FESTIVAL IN JERUSALEM ***

Elisabeth Roloff plays the complete works of J.S. Bach for organ solo in twelve recitals on Thursday evenings March 21 — June 13 at the Church of the Redeemer.

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13 Years Later: Dura Family Burries Son's Remains

For the first time, an Israeli government has agreed to return the already interred remains of a Palestinian commando to his family for reburial in his home village. Thirteen years after his death, the body of Abd al-Aziz Rajoub was handed over to his family shortly after midnight March 5, for immediate reburial at his village of Koum, near Hebron. The office of the legal advisor to the Israeli government and Rajoub's family attorney, Mazen Qubti, agreed to the exchange at the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

Rajoub was killed May 29, 1972, during a commando operation in which a Belgian airline was hijacked and flown to Lydda airport. Israeli soldiers stormed the plane, killing Rajoub. Since then, his family had been unable to bury him because the army had confiscated his body and buried it in a closed military area in the Jordan Valley.

Qubti told *Al Fajr* he was informed the morning of March 4 by government officials that Rajoub's remains would be given to the family by midnight that day. When the body was returned in a sealed coffin after midnight, Rajoub's family and other village residents attended a funeral ceremony and reburied the remains in the village cemetery. Qubti said the funeral was held in accordance with all conditions imposed by the Israelis. A score of Israeli soldiers were also present.

The bodies of Palestinian commandos killed in military operations in Israel and the occupied territories are kept in a cemetery in an undisclosed location in the Jordan Valley, a closed military area that no civilian is allowed to enter without a special permit. Rajoub's remains were removed in the presence of an Israeli representative of the legal advisor. None of the family members or their lawyer, Qubti, were allowed to be present. The Red Cross was asked by the family to attend but declined. It is not know why the Red Cross, which has a policy of not talking to the press, declined the request. The international agency has previously been involved in the exchange of bodies between Israel and neighbouring Arab states.

The decision to return Rajoub's remains and those of two other dead commandos in Israeli custody was reached after Qubti petitioned the Israeli High Court last year to return the bodies to their families for reburial according to Islamic tradition. The other two dead commandos were Ibrahim Khalid Salim and Khalil Abdullah Awawdeh, both from the Dura area. They were killed in an armed clash with Israeli soldiers in Dura November 15, 1976. According to the agreement, Salim's remains are expected to be returned within 40 days, but no exact date has been given. The remains of Awawdeh will be delayed due to his family's refusal not to open the coffins before reburial, as the Israeli government is demanding.

This condition of keeping the coffin sealed is one of many others families must agree to in order to receive their children's remains. Other conditions include: no more than 60 persons attending the funeral; the burial being carried out late at night only; no "disturbance" occurring during the burial; and the coffins not being wrapped in a Palestinian flag.

The Salim and Rajoub families agreed to all conditions. The Awawdeh family is taking their case back to the High Court on May 6 to discuss their demand to open the coffin before reburying their son.

This is the first time that the Israeli government has agreed to return the bodies of fighters without some political gain or in exchange for bodies of slain Israelis.

It is expected that other Palestinian families who have relatives buried in the Jordan Valley cemetery will also ask to have them returned for reburial in their hometowns. However, this case may not set a precedent for all future cses. The argument made at the High Court during discussion of Qubti's petition was that the home villages of the three slain Palestinians are quiet areas, so the bodies could be reburied with no "disturbance."

HAIFA UNIVERSITY SUSPENDS 2 ARAB STUDENTS

The disciplinary court at Haifa University ruled March 6 to suspend two Arab students through the end of the semester. Amir Makhoul, head of the Arab Student Council and of the Regional Council of Arab University Students, and Ja'far Farah, a leading member of the student council, are also barred from political activity upon their eventual return to the university. The two were suspended because of their role in a demonstration and subsequent fight between Arab and right-wing Jewish students during a lecture by former Israeli Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan at the university early this year.

After the court ruling, several Arab and Jewish students started a sit-in strike inside the main university hall. They later marched to the office of the university dean, where their representatives met with the dean and demanded that the temporary expulsion order be rescinded. The Arab Student Council announced they will declare a strike next week if the university administration does not rescind its decision.

The Hebrew University in Jerusalem also plans to take nine students to disciplinary court for clashing with Lebanese Phalangist representative in Israel, Pierre Yazbeck, when he spoke at the school last month.

The Dawn
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March 8

International Women's Day, March 8, was set aside to show the symbolic links existing between women and women's struggles the world over. The occasion was meant to recognise and to celebrate women as active members of the labour force, as fully functioning members of society and as comrades in political struggle. The universality of women's fight for self-determination is especially important to note on this international day of celebration.

The common fight is against discrimination by gender, experienced in varying degrees by women living in male-dominated societies. But it is also a day to look at women united by the imprint of other oppressions experienced in common: by colonialism, racism, imperialism and foreign occupation.

How women cope, and respond to these forms of domination are lessons to be listened to and learned across cultures, languages, and nationalities. It is important to break through the debilitating sense of isolation that goes together with powerlessness and to find hope from the efforts of others — of different colours, religions and circumstances.

Palestinian women have become symbols among third world women — and for progressive elements in the West as well — of the sustained fight to keep a society together despite its long occupation by a foreign force. Land, family, values, all systems of social and political organisation, have faced the Israeli bulldozer, slave labour market and phantom warplanes. Yet the fabled fragility of women has faced these destructive processes with steely strength. Their sisters in Nicaragua, South Africa and Vietnam appreciate and share in the battle, not just to survive but to progress in self-determined freedom.

On International Women's Day, we especially salute the unseen efforts of the mass of Palestinian women and call attention to the millstones hung on them by traditional society, slowing them from full participation in their people's revolutionary movement.

AL FAJR — Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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UN Commission on Human Rights

Self - Determination for the Occupied

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, DC Correspondent

The Commission on Human Rights, which is holding its forty-first session, adopted the following resolution on February 26th, 1985 under item nine of the agenda:

The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation (presented by: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Congo, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, India, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukrainian SSR, Yugoslavia).

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution 181 A and B (II) of November 29, 1947; 194 (III) of December 11, 1948; 1514 (XV) of December 14, 1960; 3236 (XXIX) of November 22, 1974; 3275 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of November 10, 1975; 32/14 of November 7, 1977; 32/20 of November 25, 1977; 32/40 A and B of December 2, 1977; 32/42 of December 7, 1977; 33/28 A to C of December 7, 1978; 34/65 A to D of November 29, and December 12, 1979; 7/2 of July 29, 1980; 35/169 A to E of December 15, 1980; 36/120 A to F of December 10, 1981; 36/226 A and B of December 17, 1981; 7/9 of September 24, 1982; 37/86 A to E of December 10 and 20, 1982; 38/58 A to E of December 13, 1983; and 39/49 A to D of December 14, 1984,

Recalling further Economic and Social Council Resolutions 1865 (LVI) and 1866 (LVI) of May 17, 1974,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1982/3 of February 11, 1982; 1983/3 of February 15, 1983; and 1984/11 of February 29, 1984,

Bearing in mind the reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people,

Emphasising once more that the Palestinian people are entitled to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions, and expressing its grave concern that Israel has prevented the Palestinian people by force from enjoying their inalienable rights, in particular their right to self-determination, in defiance of the principles of the international law and in disregard of the will of the international community,

Expressing its grave concern that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security, as has been tragically illustrated by Israel's invasion and continued occupation of Lebanon,

Welcoming the Arab peace plan adopted by the twelfth Arab Summit conference, held in Fez, Morocco on Setember 9, 1982,

Noting with satisfaction the outcome of the proceedings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva from August 29 to September 7, 1983,

Gravely concerned at the agreements on strategic cooperation between the United States of America and Israel signed on November 30, 1981, as well as the agreements recently concluded in this respect, which would encourage and support Israeli policies of aggression and expansion,

1. *Condemns* Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories including Jerusalem, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and demands the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of Israel from all these occupied territories;

2. *Condemns* Israel's aggression and practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and outside those territories, particularly against Palestinians in Lebanon, as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon which claimed the lives of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians;

3. *Strongly condemns* anew Israel's responsibility for the large-scale massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, which constituted an act of genocide, and expresses its grave concern that, until a just and equitable solution to the problem of Palestine has been implemented, the Palestinian people will be exposed to grave dangers such as the appalling massacre perpetrated in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps;

4. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and the establishment of a fully independent and sovereign state of Palestine;

5. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property, from which they have been uprooted by force, and calls for their return and the exercise of their right to self-determination;

6. *Recognises* the right of the Palestinian people to regain their rights by all means in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

7. *Reaffirms* the basic principle that the future of the Palestinian people can only be decided with its full participation in all efforts through its legitimate and sole representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation;

8 *Reaffirms* its rejection of all partial agreements and separate treaties insofar as they violate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and contradict the principles of just and comprehensive solutions to the Middle East problem that ensure the establishment of a just peace in the area, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with relevant United Nations resolutions;

9. *Strongly rejects* the plan of 'autonomy" within the framework of the "Camp David Accords" and declares that these accords have no validity in determining the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

10. *Reaffirms* its support to the Geneva declaration on Palestine adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, and welcomes the call for convening an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, in which all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO, the USSR, and the US, as well as other concerned states, participate on an equal footing and with equal rights;

11. *Expresses its deep regret* at the negative reaction of the United States of America and Israel towards the abovementioned international conference, and calls upon the United States and Israel to reconsider their attitude so as to facilitate the convening of the conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation on an equal footing with all parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict;

12 *Urges* all states, United Nations organs specialised agencies and other international organisations to extend their support to the Palestinian people through its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in its struggle to restore its rights in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Natons;

13. *Requests* the secretary-general to make available to the Commission on Human Rights and to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities the reports, studies and publications prepared by the division for Palestinian rights;

14. *Decides* to place this item on the provisional agenda at its forty-second session as a matter of priority.

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

The Israeli Army: Defeated in Lebanon

Ze'ev Schiff, military correspondent for the Hebrew daily *Ha-Aretz*, recently returned from overseas and paid his first visit to Lebanon since July 1983. Amazed and distressed at the psychological deterioration he found, he recommends immediate withdrawal to the international border. If the army remains in its present untenable position, he warns, a war with Syria will inevitably break out.

Israeli troups dismantling military instalations in South Lebanon.

Visiting Lebanon after a protracted absence is like getting belted in the face; it takes the wind out of you. A year-and-a-half ago, in July 1983, I paid a farewell visit to the Israeli forces in Lebanon before going abroad. At the time, the army was busy policing the Shouf region, trying to keep the peace between the different hostile ethnic groups. The Lebanese war was still considered "a cherry war" even though some of those cherries were proving lethal, and a lot of people in the army were still hoping for the best.

My lengthy sojourn abroad prevented me from following the gradual deterioration of the situation; hence my shock at the changes that have taken place. Not only Lebanon has changed. First and foremost, the Israeli army has undergone a transformation that is both astonishing and distressing. The initiators of this war will never be forgiven for what they've done to the army. Even the terminology changed during my absence. Nobody talks anymore about who or what the army is there to protect; the question at present is "who will protect the Israeli soldiers?" But the first change that hits you is the look in peoples' eyes — both the eyes of the Israeli soldiers and the eyes of the Lebanese. It made a deep impression on me during my visit and reminded me of the American soldiers I had seen during the final stages of the Vietnam war. It's the look of soldiers and officers who know they don't have the slightest chance of emerging victorious.

In Lebanon I saw a frustrated army. It's too bad that Yitzhak Shamir and his cohorts, who are currently opposing the withdrawal, cannot travel to Lebanon *incognito* and see for themselves what's really going on up there. They would find out that the army is doing everything it can to avoid sending reservists to Lebanon and using new recruits (from the standing army) in their place.

In Lebanon you see what happens when an army's military prowess becomes useless; although the Israeli army scored a military victory in Lebanon, at present it can't exert its strength. The Americans had a similar experience in Vietnam, for although the American army could have ground North Vietnam into dust, political, social, and moral restraints prevented them from doing so. And the same holds true for the Israeli army in Lebanon. From a strictly military perspective, if it wanted to, the Israeli army could snuff out the Shi'ite guerrillas — but to do so would involve bloodshed and the mass expulsion of Shi'ites from dozens of villages, an operation that would leave south Lebanon almost totally desertd. Although the Syrians can carry out actions of that kind with impunity, the state of Israel and the Israeli army cannot.

Sharon's Terror Tactics Failed

We've gotten into this mess because Ariel Sharon, his supporters, and his advisors did not grasp the military limitations of a small country; they also forgot that Israel is a Jewish state. Now, a lot of people claim that Sharon didn't know what Lebanon was like, but that's only part of the story. He also didn't know what Israel was like; he didn't know what would be tolerated and what would not. He limited his strategy to military tactics, and it seems that for him the whole operation was conceived in terms akin to those he employed when he commanded Unit 101 [a terroristic army unit that operated in the early 1950s].

The change in the situation also manifests itself in the offensive and defensive strategies currently employed there. Let me cite one example: the army outpost where six Israeli soldiers were wounded last week. It was established on a main traffic artery, at the foot of two hills. It was probably set up to serve as a checkpoint where cars could be stopped and searched and terrorists thwarted from smuggling arms to the south. But there's a guerrilla war going on in Lebanon in which small bands of attackers are not afraid of launching frontal attacks against well-armed army units. So it was that a guerrilla band exploited the hills overlooking the outpost and attacked the soldiers positioned there at close range.

The West Bank may have been witness to terrorist campaigns, but in south Lebanon, the Shi'ites are waging a guerrilla war against Israel and there's a vast difference betwen the two, despite the fact that guerrillas use terrorist tactics. In south Lebanon, the guerrillas aren't afraid of attacking Israeli army units or military convoys at close range. Israeli soldiers keep their finger on the trigger at all times and regard everyone there as a potential enemy. Deep down — regardless of their political outlook — they all feel that this isn't what the army was established for.

From Rice to Rockets

Then there's the look in the eyes of the Shi'ites of Lebanon, further testimony of what's happened there over the past year-and-a-half. They look at you with a kind of unyielding hate; it's not so much a look of fear as one of hostility. They look right through you, even if you're only a metre away. The chasm that has opened up between the Israeli army and the Shi'ite community is simply astonishing, especially given the warm welcome the Israelis received back in 1982, when they were literally showered with rice. It's a chasm that will be difficult to bridge. A few months ago after giving a lecture in Ohio, a few young Shi'ites came up to me and said: "Once we fought against the Palestinians in southern Lebanon. We never harmed you. But now we're fighting against you. We aren't terrorists — we're freedom fighters." I found it difficult to reply to their charges.

The withdrawal taking place at present should have taken place a long time ago. Back it October 1982, General Amir Drori claimed nothing good could come out of Lebanon and suggested the army redeploy at the Litani River. But his proposal was rejected. At the time, the government thought Israel was within a hair's breadth of securing a peace treaty with Lebanon (even though such a treaty wouldn't be worth the paper it was printed on). After withdrawing from the Shouf, another proposal was put forward, this time for pulling out of the hazardous area around Sidon; but once again, it was rejected. Strategic reasons were cited which today seem tragi-comic. One general defined them thus: "Instead of ridding ourselves of the cancer that was forming in our midst, they tried to convince us that it was better to keep watch over it in our stomach."

Withdrawal to Nowhere

After completing the first phase of the pullout, the army will redeploy at a line that has no intrinsic military value; it is no more than the result of a political compromise and, in spite of the outposts established on the ground, it won't be a line so much as a no-man's land in which the Israeli army will operate. Any army officer would tell you as much after seeing the area for himself. The army will be surrounded by Shi'ite villages and will have little choice but to harass the residents living in close proximity to the "line." Israeli soldiers will have to pay for this from time to time and the hatred of the Shi'ites will become that much more intense. From a military perspective, it's clear that the withdrawal should have been total — back to the international border or at least to the Litani line. To believe that by redeploying here we'll be able to pressure Syria or Lebanon into any kind of agreement is universally recognised as a ludicrous idea.

With Shamir claiming that our recent troubles are due to the government's decision to withdraw and not [the Likud government's 1982 decision] to invade Lebanon or our protracted stay there, it's worth raising a few points about the decision to remain in the Beqa'a Valley, opposite Damascus, "in order to pressure the Syrians into reaching an agreement with us." Deploying the army against Syria with Damascus in range of Israeli cannons will only forward one process: war. If we're planning a war against Syria and waiting for an opportunity to launch it, then we've done right by remaining there. It's a good position from which to launch an offensive. But I don't know of any plans for such a war. Of course, with Sharon drawing up secret plans to save the country's economy, perhaps Yoram Aridor is engaged in drawing up a plan for an attack on Syria. May God help us.

Quit the Beqa'a

If we're not planning a war against Damascus, we have no reason to be deployed against Damascus, for simply by being there we're giving the other side reason to gear up for a counter-attack. That's how the Israeli army would react were the situation to be reversed. And that's also what happened at the Suez Canal. If we heed Shamir and his supporters — and their demand that the army remain in Lebanon until such time as the enemy agrees to safeguard our northern border — the same thing that happened at the Suez Canal in 1973 will happen in Lebanon. It's inevitable. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but one day there will be a flare-up. Even though we have Jebel Barouq in our hands we can still be caught off guard and what's considered a good jumping-off point to Damascus can turn into a trap for our forces.

In such a case, we won't be able to broaden the front to the Golan Heights or other areas to bail them out. I therefore believe we should leave the Beqa'a Valley immediately — if not sooner. (Translation: HaAretz, February 17, 1985).

The military authorities have been busy building roadblocks of all kinds for the past 18 years of occupation. An often overlooked "travel restriction" is that imposed on unborn Palestinian babies. *Al Fajr*'s Manar Sa'id examines how the West Bank's underdeveloped medical system makes problem-free births and healthy starts for young life a risky business.

Maternity: High Risk in the West Bank

In the West Bank where women, on average, give birth seven times during their lives, good maternity care is a life-and-death necessity. After five pregnancies, the risk to the mother dramatically increases to the level of a first pregnancy. Many women here continue to give birth long past age 40, when the dangers of miscarriages or birth defects multiply. The social pressure on women to push their childbearing capacities past the maximum should logically be met by more than adequate maternity care in the West Bank.

The reality of Israeli occupation has instead dictated another system: one of chaos and confusion. In the words of one UNRWA doctor, this results in an unknown amount of "human wastage" — in the unrecorded and tragically ignored cases of miscarriages or stillborn babies delivered at home. Most of the harm befalling mother or child during pregnancy and birth could be eliminated given adequate antenatal clinics, maternity facilities, and educational programmes for expectant mothers, as well as comprehensive medical studies surveying all aspects of the birth process to pinpoint gaps in health care.

Premature triplets resting in a Maqassed Hospital incubator after birth: *"Not one intensive care neonatal unit in the entire West Bank."*

Home vs. Hospital Deliveries

Dr Muhiyeh Khilfeh, who did a study on children's health in the Nablus region for the Jordanian Medical Association, found that in 1980, only 44.8 percent of all deliveries actually took place in hospital. The rest occurred at home, under the supervision of *dayas*, traditional village midwives. Khilfeh stressed, as did almost every other obstetrician, that — in stark contrast to hospital deliveries — deaths resulting from home deliveries are simply not recorded. They are not reported as births or as deaths (see box for mortality rates of recorded deliveries). Consequently, any Israeli estimates of the mortality rate highly underestimate the severity of the problem, while figures that try to take the unknown factor into consideration are at best only educated guesses.

Dr Ahmad Muhtadie, director of the Hospice Hospital in Jerusalem's Old City and head of its gynaecology and obstetrics department, told Al Fajr that for home deliveries, he thinks the number of babies lost is "higher than in hospital deliveries." Even when a problem home delivery is rushed to hospital, it is often too late. He estimates that the rate of perinatal mortality (deaths during birth or in the first week of life) for home births is 2-3 percent higher than in regular hospital deliveries because expert treatment comes far too late. He explained, "The effect of neglected deliveries is quite high and may cause the loss of the baby, rupture of the birth canal, bleeding or infection in the mother or brain damage to the baby. Of the problem cases needing expert care, which normally constitute five percent of all pregnancies, one-third of them — because of neglect — will result in damage to the baby, the mother or, usually, to both of them."

Facilities

Palestinian doctors have conflicting theories regarding proper childbirthing. Some medical professionals like Dr Muhtadie insist that, "Ideally, all deliveries should be hospital deliveries. Patients should be registered at antenatal clinics and screened early in the pregnancy at least once. If they really want a home delivery, a specialist should decide whether or not this is appropriate." However, Dr Muhtadie admits that in practice, 90 percent of all births are unproblematic and could be safe home deliveries. By contrast, Dr Mohammed Saad al-Faqi, director of the UNRWA-sponsored Am'ari Camp Health Centre, has a much higher estimate of the rate of "risky" deliveries — 30 percent — and insists that all of these should be hospital deliveries.

Nevertheless, the number of "normal" pregnancies is good news for the West Bank — where there simply aren't enough hospital beds to accommodate all deliveries in hospital. For example, in the Nablus district, with a population of about 150,000, there are a total of 33 maternity beds for three hospitals, which one Nablus doctor termed "inadequate." The obvious need, then, is how to screen the "problem" pregnancies from the other 70-90 percent and make sure that these women are given adequate and affordable maternity care in hospital. Dr Mina Abu Shaqra, head of the maternity department at Maqassed Hospital, explained, "If we had adequate antenatal clinics, most of the problems would be solved. Then professionals would decide who would deliver in hospital and who would deliver at home. It's not possible for all women to deliver in hospital — there simply aren't enough beds."

What would be a hard enough job in any society strains the limits of the West Bank's completely inadequate health infrastructure, financially starved by Israel's occupation policy.

There are currently nine government and six private hospitals to serve a total West Bank population of 830,000. In the Jerusalem district (Palestinian population of 120,000) there are seven additional hospitals, of which six are privately run. A spokesperson for the military's health department claims there are 131 mother-and-child clinics in the West Bank, of which only 24 are privately-run. The figure for antenatal clinics in Jerusalem — both government and private — was considered a "military secret" and was not made available to this reporter. Most of these facilities are concentrated in the large urban centres.

No comprehensive data is available regarding the proliferation of parallel yet autonomous clinics and hospitals which have sprung up in the occupied territories to compensate for the lack of a national health care system. A look at particular institutions or regions can only give an incomplete picture of the conditions for given birth in the West Bank.

The situation in Jerusalem is atypical because Israeli national insurance gives a maternity grant to all mothers who deliver in hospital. The grant now stands at IS320,000 and covers hospital expenses plus additional necessities for childbirth. Jerusalem doctors estimate that nearly 100 percent of deliveries in their district take place in hospital.

Women from the rest of the West Bank face a much more difficult challenge. If she is from an urban area, an expectant mother probably will visit an antenatal clinic prior to birth and check into a hospital for the actual delivery. Dr Abd al-Rahman Shipar, director of Rafidiya government hospital in Nablus and head of its gynaecology and obstetrics department, notes that since the government hospitals cut their maternity fees in half two years ago — from JD30 to JD15 per night — more women are encouraged to deliver in government hospitals. The average maternity fee at private West Bank hospitals now is JD100-140.

Midwives

For village women, the most comfortable way to give birth — due to financial constraints, local traditions regarding women's privacy, and the emotional security of doing it the way it's been done for centuries — is still fro-

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HIGH MORTALITY RATES — WHAT ARE THE REAL FIGURES?

In the West Bank, complete statistics giving the ratio between healthy births and "problematic" births are — as usual — hard to come by. The Israeli military authorities do little "research" beyond publishing figures on the government-run hospitals and clinics — with the obvious aim of whitewashing the government health system, rather than seriously examining it. Yet something is clearly wrong. "It is not unusual to see a woman having 15 pregnancies — of which one-third will be lost," as Dr Muhtadie of the Hospice Hospital told *Al Fajr*.

Dr Mina Abu Shaqra, from Maqassed Hospital, estimated at that private hospital the perinatal mortality rate (deaths during birth or in the first week of life) is 34—40 per 1000 deliveries. According to his estimate, this is five times the rate in Scandinavian countries (6—7 per 1000), four times the rate in England (8—10) and three times the US rate (11—12). Dr Mohammed Saab al Faqi, of UNRWA's Am'ari Camp Health Centre, confirmed this figure for the refugee population, which is fully covered by UNRWA health services. He said the overall neonatal mortality rate (deaths within the first month of life) in refugee camps is 40 per thousand births, although he claimed that at Am'ari it is only 25 per thousand.

Another key to birth-related mortality rates is "the worldwide medical fact" that of all infant mortality cases, "50 percent of the deaths take place within the first two days and 70 percent of them within the first four weeks" after birth, according to Dr Muhiyeh Khilfeh of the Jordanian Medical Association.

Thus we can look at the West Bank's infant mortality rate (deaths during the first year after birth) to approximate how many of these deaths are birth-related. Dr Rita Giacaman, a Biology professor at Bir Zeit University, found in a 1983 study that Palestinian researchers estimate the average infant mortality rate in the West Bank ranges between 50—100 deaths per 1000 live births. The rate is "closer to 50 in the urban regions and refugee camps due to the presence of UNRWA health services, and over 100 in the more remote areas such as the Jordan Valley region." According to Khilfeh's estimates then, 70 percent of these cases were actually cases of neonatal mortalities — complications arising from the pregnancy and birth itself. This would bring the neonatal mortality rate up to 35—70 per 1000 live births

However, all these figures are calculated only from registered live births or hospital delivery statistics. The number of deaths resulting from home deliveries is not recorded anywhere — a tragic phenomenon of stillborn babies, the dimensions of which the Israeli government would like to keep secret

A Palestinian History of Woman's Struggle

The struggle of Palestinian women for the Palestinian national cause has a long history. Writer Usama Khalid traces the main stages of this struggle and outlines the most important achievements by Palestinian women in the social, cultural and political fields. This article, which appeared in 1984, is reprinted from *Al Hadaf* Arabic weekly.

A textile factory established in Ramallah in 1939. The same old machines are still in use.

The struggle of the Palestinian people, which necessarily includes the struggle of Palestinian women as an integral part of this people, can be seen in three main stages: the first stage encompasses the beginning of the Zionist invasion until the establishment of Israel in 1948; the second stage extends from the establishment of Israel until June 1967, and the third stage is the contemporary Palestinian national revolution.

The First Stage: Reaching Out

The first stage is characterised by spontaneous, unorganised participation by women as well as the containment of the struggle of women to only passive participation in popular resistance — not including their limited participation in the military struggle — because of the impact of the social traditions on their movement. This struggle, however, constituted a first step towards her social and economic liberation as well as the raising of her national and political consciousness. The Palestinian woman became aware of her role in the national struggle after the first Zionist invasion in 1884, when she walked hand-in-hand with the Palestinian farmer to remove the first settlement the Zionists attempted to establish near the town of Afoula.

Their consciousness grew with the end of World War I and Balfour's Declaration in November 1917 when they took part in huge demonstrations which broke out everywhere in Palestine against the infamous letter and against the plans of the imperialists against the Arab and Palestinian peoples.

In 1921, Palestinian women took a courageous and qualitative step embodied in the founding of the first women's organisation by a number of pioneer woman like Emilia al-Sakakini and Zleicha al-Shabi. It played an important role in organising the women's struggle, including the organising of demonstrations demanding an end to the Zionist settlements that were cropping up in Palestine. When the 1929 revolt broke out, the women also took part in demonstrations which swept the country and a number of women were martyred by the British forces, including Jamila al-Aza'ar, Aisha Abu Hassan, Azba Mohammed Salami and others. The Arab women also organised a women's conference in Jerusalem in October 1929 in which hundreds of women protested oppressive measures and facilitation of Jewish immigration to Palestine carried out by the British mandate authorities. The conference sent protest letters to the king of England and to the United Nations, and they formed a 14-member delegation to meet with the high commissioner to demand the rescinding of the Balfour Declaration, the halt of Zionist immigration to Palestine, the release of Palestinian detainees and a halt to the oppressive measures, including torture, practised against the Palestinian people. After the conference, the women marched through the streets of Jerusalem chanting anti-British slogans. The year before, the Society of Arab Women was founded as a political organisation with the purpose of sharing with the men in the national struggle. Among the founding women were Khadija al-Husseini, Tarab Abd al-Hadi, Zakiya al-Budiri, Wahida al-Khaldi and Nia'amat al-Alami.

With the outbreak of the 1936 revolt and the famous strike which lasted more than six months, the struggle of the Palestinian woman took on a new form. Women began to solicit donations and distribute the funds among the needy, particularly the families of revolutionaries and detainees; to buy arms; to make clothes; and to deliver weapons, water, food and letters to the revolutionaries. They also stood by the revolutionaries in confronting the British-backed Zionist organisations. The martyrdom of Fatima Ghazal in the battle of Wadi Azzoun between Palestinian guerrillas and British soldiers on June 26, 1936 is a demonstration of the contribution of Palestinian women to the national struggle. When the partition plan was put forth, the Palestinian women set out hand in hand with the men to resist the partition by taking part in setting up barricades, digging tunnels and transporting weapons. They also formed revolutionary societies and cells, such as that of Zaher al-Iqhewan in Jaffa, whose task was to provide the guerrillas food and water. Among the members of this cell were Yousra Tuqan, Fatima Abu al-Huda, Juhayna Khorshed and Arabiya Khorshed. Also the Women's Solidarity Society, which was founded in 1942, performed the same tasks in various Palestinian towns and villages as well as participating in most of the battles which occurred at that time in which a number of women were martyred. Among them were Juliet Zakka, Jamila Ahmad, Thiba Ataya, and Helwa Zeidan who in April 1948 picked up her son's weapons after he and his father fell in battle before her eyes and began to shoot at the Zionists until she was killed.

On April 10 of the same year the woman teacher Hayat al-Nabulsi was martyred in the Deir Yassin massacre while giving first aid to one of the wounded. She had left her parents' house in Jerusalem and hurried to Deir Yassin village to help the population. In Nablus, Palestinian women put on uniforms and fought against the British forces as well as helping in transporting arms, water and food.

The Second Stage: Limits Abound

What characterises this stage (1948 — 1967) from the previous one is the huge retreat from the direct struggle by Palestinian women, and the restriction of her struggle to social, charitable and superficial political activities due to the national bourgeois character of the leadership in this stage. Despite the fact that Palestinian women made some progress regarding her participation in the work force — especially inside the 1948 borders of Israel — and the increasing interest of women in education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, their participation remained limited to the educated women and university students. This is attributed to a set of factors: namely, the Zionist policy inside territory occupied in 1948 where they attempted to impose a policy of collective ignorance or the prevention of Palestinians from obtaining an education or from setting up clubs and national institutions. The problem was the same with the Jordanian regime, which annexed the West Bank and exercised brutal suppression against the Palestinians there.

In the 1948 occupied lands of Palestine, Palestinian women found themselves in a difficult economic situation caused by gross Zionist exploitation and lack of work. She was forced to share the family responsibilities with her husband after he too was hurt by the 1948 exodus and the lack of work. Therefore she resorted to working in the service and agricultural sectors, which were only marginally productive. She therefore couldn't pursue her higher education until the beginning of the 1960s. While her participation in the social and political fields was limited, she found some relief through the Israeli Communist Party, the only available framework for her because the Zionist authorities had banned independent Arab clubs and societies.

In the Gaza Strip, given the backward social reality and the depressing economic situation, we find that women's participation in the struggle was limited and not very effective. Their struggle in this area was limited to popular marches and demonstrations, the most important of which were those which broke out in 1954 in protest of the international proposal to settle the Gazan refugees in the Sinai desert and the demonstrations which swept the Gaza Strip in February 1955 following the Zionist attack on the Gaza railway station, the blowing up of houses, and the shooting of Palestinian residents. She also took part in the demonstrations organised after the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip following the declaration of a plan to internationalise the Strip. These demonstrations lasted for a week and ended with the cancellation of the plan.

Galilee women holding a sit-in opposite the Israeli Knesset.

West Bank women protesting ill treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

In the social field, women's participation also remained limited and confined to the setting up of the Struggler's Society to look after the wounded and handicapped survivors of the various wars. After the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964, the Palestinian Women's Association was set up, through which Palestinian women took part in the first session of the Palestinian National Council held in Jerusalem.

In the work field, her participation was restricted to the agricultural sector, which is the base of the Palestinian economy. We should point to the broad interest of the Palestinian women in education in Gaza due to the opportunities provided by the Egyptian regime in this field. This gave women the opportunity to work as teachers, engineers, doctors and social workers, and consequently facilitated her involvement in the national struggle.

> The struggle of women in the Palestinian revolution can be divided into two stages in its third part: the first one begins from June 1967 until 1972 and second one from 1973 until today.

In the West Bank, women found themselves facing family responsibilities as well as helping to ensure their livelihood. She resorted to jobs like teaching and travelled to Arab Gulf states, which were at that time in urgent need of women teachers, clerks and other workers. In the social field, her struggle took the form of charity because of the suppression exercised by the Jordanian monarchy and the dominance of Palestinian society by certain sectors from the national bourgeoisie whose interests were connected with the interests of the Jordanian regime. However, we cannot deny their role in setting up the different charitable societies and institutions which later constituted good frameworks for national struggle. Among these societies and institutions are the Orphan's Home, the Youth Home, the Arab Young Women's Club, the Arab Children's College, the Arab Women's Society, the Nursing Centre, the Society for the Preservation of Culture and al-Maqassed Charitable Society.

In 1965, the Palestinian Women's Association held its first conference and later set up branches in different parts of the West Bank. But the Jordanian regime banned this association in 1966 after it shut down all the institutions of the PLO and after it surmised that this association had begun to take a political line through its connection with the national forces and parties and its participation in the resistance against the suppressive measures of the Jordanian regime, especially in the demonstrations and strikes which swept the West Bank at that time. But the association continued to work as a clandestine organisation under the cover of various charitable societies in the West Bank which organised literacy, sewing, first aid and nursing courses. Also they played a role in the political education of women after they took a qualitative step by joining the political parties and the national movements in the 1960's. Although most of the active women were still from the educated sector, many were students and the wives and relatives of some of the participants in the struggle. But this political struggle was confined to their participation in the demonstrations and popular marches, their distribution of leaflets and their writing of slogans on walls, and their participation in strikes.

The Third Stage: On the Popular Level

The struggle of women in the Palestinian revolution can be divided into two stages in its third part: the first one begins from June 1967 until 1972 and second one from 1973 until today.

The first stage is characterised by an escalation of military struggle in addition to the passive resistance activities. In the field of military struggle, Palestinian women were particularly effective compared to their participation in the previous stages and to the contribution of Arab women in general to military struggle; but this participation remained limited and was confined to a few vanguard women. The role of the Palestinian women in this struggle was not confined to only transporting arms and storing them, providing shelter to the *fedayin* and aiding them in hiding and escaping outside the home. It went beyond that to planning and carrying out military operations.

In 1967, the Zionist authorities captured Fatme Barnawi, from Jerusalem, after she placed an explosive charge in Zion cinema in Tel Aviv. On November 21, 1968 the first woman martyr, Shadia Abu Ghazali, was killed while she was placing an explosive charge in one of the Israeli military complexes. In 1969 the Israeli occupation authorities arrested a number of militant Palestinian women — among them are Rasmiyya Oudi, Aisha Oudi, Miriam al-Shakhshir, Latifa al-Hawari, Rashida Ibid and others — on charges of possessing weapons and explosives and the planning and implementation of two big military operations: the attmept to blow up a Supersol market and a site at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Women such as Leila Khalid, Amina Dahbour, Terese Halsa also participated in special operations such as the sabotage, hijacking and destruction of planes. Halsa was captured in 1972 after she was injured by shrapnel after the Zionist authorities forced their way onto the hijacked plane. Other militant women were arrested for transferring weapons and explosives from outside the homeland. An example is the militant Abla Taha, who was arrested at the Jordan River bridge on her way to the West Bank, carrying explosives. Also women played an important role in popularising the martyred hero "Guevara of Gaza" (Mahmoud al-Usoud). "Guevara" operated in the Gaza Strip at night within sight of the enemy. It was the role of women to store and transfer weapons in the various areas, besides serving as contacts among the different military groups.

The 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was met by consecutive popular uprisings. Demonstrations, marches and strikes swept most Palestinian villages and towns, in which women exhibited broad and effective participation. One of the largest demonstrations was in Jerusalem in April 1968 in protest of an Israeli military parade, where women from all the occupied homeland assembled dressed in black and carrying slogans, placards and Palestinian flags. But the Israeli forces dispersed the demonstration in a brutal and vicious manner; soldiers used clubs, gunbutts and tear gas against the demonstrating women. Tens were wounded and arrested.

In Jabalya refugee camp and Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip, five girls were killed by Israeli soldiers during the forceful dispersion of demonstrations. Fadwa Abu Ghosh was martyred after she attacked a soldier and tried to strangle him. In July 1968 the Israeli occupation authorities launched a large arrest campaign in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and arrested many women in connection with aiding the *fedayin*, distributing leaflets and raising donations. In August of the same year occupation forces fired at a huge demonstration which was marching through Nablus in protest of the declaration of Jerusalem's annexation and the attempts to expel refugees from Jabalya camp. In Rafah one woman was killed and many othes wounded when Israeli soldiers opened fire at women demonstrating to break the siege imposed on the town following the assassination of the military governor. Strikes and demonstrations swept through area villages and towns in response. In Jerusalem, women organised a sit-in in the Al-Qiame church and Omar Mosque and in front of some of the foreign consulates. After three days, Israeli soldiers dispersed the sit-in by force.

Many women were also subjected to expulsion such as Abla Taha, Issam Abd al-Hadi, Huda Abd al-Hadi and Nawal al-Titi. Others were subjected to fines, arrest and imprisonment for long terms. In 1969, there were 60 women detainees in Nablus prison alone. The detained women were subjected to the most cruel psychological and physical torture; they were prevented from family visits and forced into appalling detention conditions.

continued next week

Maternity

continued from page 7

quently at home. The village *dayas*, who train in apprenticeships with older *dayas* and learn "on the job," create an atmosphere of "patience, experience and trustworthiness," as Dr Faqi explained. While most practising *dayas* are unregistered, have never received any formal medical training and are usually illiterate, they still deliver over 50 percent of the babies in the West Bank. Normally, they take about JD10-15 for a delivery. If complications arise, the local general practioner is called in and receives half the fee. If the GP cannot handle it, the case is usually transferred to hospital, often too late to save the baby or prevent damage to the mother. Because traditional *dayas* are in direct competition with the medical establishment, they often will postpone transferring problem cases until the last possible minute (or not at all). This accounts for the hidden, yet undoubtedly high, mortality rate for home deliveries.

Much of this injury could be prevented with adequate back-up systems of trained medical personnel willing to supervise home deliveries, ambulances, and fast hospital admissions procedures. Dr Khilfeh pointed out that the poor "security" situation for Palestinians on the West Bank — including curfews, random arrests by soldiers of anyone on the streets at night, and violent settler harassment — has effectively curtailed nighttime house calls by medical personnel. A woman who will deliver at night is left with only two alternatives — to check into a hospital in advance, if she has the foresight and can afford it, or to take her chances and deliver at home.

In addition, village *dayas* continue to promote some local customs associated with childbirth which are problematic. They often manually dialate pregnant women using olive oil, which contains many impurities and almost always leads to infection. Breastfeeding immediately after delivery is sometimes discouraged as leading to "colic" and pain for the mother (when it actually helps the uterus to contract). Washing the breasts is said to make the milk thin (when it is actually more sanitary for the baby). It is also traditional to put *kohl* (mascara-like pigment) on newborn babies' eyes to prevent infection; ironically it might contain irritants that induce infection.

Refugee Care

UNRWA has absorbed the *dayas* into its autonomous medical system and at the same time virtually eliminated the mortality rate associated with birth, according to Dr Faqi. Because UNRWA provides medical services to all registered refugees free of charge, all pregnant women covered by UNRWA register at the antenatal clinics and see a doctor regularly during their pregnancy. They are given general examinations and standard laboratory tests to ensure the continued health of the expectant mother. They are also given supplementary iron and extra rations (mostly fat and carbohydrates).

These antenatal checkups prepare the majority of pregnant mothers for home deliveries, carried out under the supervision of local *dayas* employed by UNRWA. The *dayas* have been given medical training by UNRWA to ensure proper sanitary procedures and UNRWA provides all the necessary supplies. The rest of the "problem" cases, having been screened in advance, are referred to hospital for special treatment. Supposedly UNRWA will cover hospital expenses incurred, but only at government hospital rates (JD15 per night). Many women prefer to check into the more expensive private hospitals instead, given the notoriously bad reputation of government hospitals. They are not reimbursed the full amount of their maternity costs.

In fact, Dr Faqi claimed that all cases of neonatal mortality from Am'ari camp resulted from hospital-referred deliveries. He blamed this paradox on "cross-infection" in hospitals where, due to overcrowding and poor hygiene, vulnerable infants are exposed to dangerous infectious diseases. He singled out the government hospitals as being particularly unsanitary.

The occupation's financial starvation of medical institutions seriously effects personnel. Low salaries have driven medical professionals out of the West Bank. Dr Abu Shaqra guessed that by now "There can't be more than 10 registered midwives in the whole West Bank." He explained that he has two practical (unregistered) *dayas* in his department who, despite their lack of formal medical training, are kept on "because they cannot be replaced." In Abu Shaqra's opinion, traditional *dayas* are "impossible to train properly because they are mostly illiterate." He thinks they will gradually have to be phased out, as they were in Jordan, ignoring the success UNRWA and other private organisations have had giving extra instruction to practical midwives and then employing them.

Every specialist bemoaned the dearth of intensive care units for newborns throughout the West Bank. There is not one centre capable of caring adequately for problematic newborns. Maqassed Hospital has recently hired its first neonatalogist, so perhaps the first intensive care neonatal unit is now in the making.

Positive Efforts

Grassroots organisations — like women's or other charitable societies — can only combat some of these deficiencies, due to financial limitations. In general, while they haven't been able to compensate for the lack of expensive medical infrastructure — like extending hospital services or insurance benefits — they have been able to increase the number of antenatal clinics and raise consciousness about using them.

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) began an extensive educational campaign in the West Bank in 1975 which has expanded over the years to include instruction in hygiene, nutrition, child development, and first aid. They have put together a 71-page manual in English and Arabic called *Fundamentals of Health Education for Mothers* which presents a survey of simple preventive medicine techniques in an organic manner, based on the "lifecycle of the bride." Information is provided for various stages in a woman's life — first as wife and then as mother — beginning with nutrition and hygiene for newlyweds, then progressing to reproduction and advice on pregnancy and birth, followed by care of the newborn. The text is simple and supplemented with pictures.

CRS is seeking to spread this health information among the village population which has little or no health awareness. According to the current director, Daniel Carr the programme is deliberately designed to reach "the maximum number of people" with the resources available. They are cooperating closely with local charitable societies. The societies seek out literate village residents who wish to become permanent local health workers and CRS provides trained medical personnel to teach them the six-month syllabus. The course qualifies the village health workers to diagnose and treat simple cases and they know when to refer serious cases to medical professionals in their district. The health workers are now operating in 112 West Bank villages and are vital in village communities where illiteracy among women can be as high as 80-90 percent. They become vehicles for retaining and transferring information.

CRS does not have the financial resources to establish village clinics or staff them with doctors. They see as their goal the elevation of health consciousness and the communication of health care basics directly to the people who need them most. Thus the chapters in their manual on pregnancy and giving birth prepare women for healthy home deliveries and give them advice on how to recognise possible complications that would put the mother at risk and require supervision or hospitalisation.

"It is not unusual to see a woman having 15 pregnancies — of which one-third will be lost."/POP photo

The Bir Zeit Women's Charitable Society is an example of a more developed community-based clinic which is also spreading health information and services to the 23 outlying villages in its area. Based on a similar structure of training village health educators in six-month courses and then establishing them in small village clinics, the society seeks to put the necessary information directly into the hands of the women who need it most. In addition to the rural outreach programme, it has a permanent clinic staffed with doctors and nurses that provides complementary services: mother-and-child health care, family planning counselling, primary health care, dental and ophthalmic clinics and even handicraft courses. The director of the Bir Zeit Women's Charitable Society, Georgette Abed, said that next they would like to hire a male health educator who can start involving men more in the project of family health.

According to Amin al-Khatib, director of the Union of Charitable Societies in Jerusalem, there are nine mother-and-child clinics in the greater Jerusalem area sponsored by a variety of private organisations, including the Red Crescent. However, they are not necessarily antenatal clinics; some of them are only able to offer informational rather than clinical help. This figure may be incomplete because Maqassed Hospital, for example, runs six antenatal clinics, two at the hospital itself and four others at various locations in the Jerusalem district, only one of which was registered with the Union of Charitable Societies.

What Is To Be Done

According to the survey provided above, there are seven main deficiencies in the West Bank's health care system which make for substandard conditions for giving birth in the West Bank: 1) Affordable hospital beds for the West Bank population with the added problem that government hospital beds are inadequate because of low budgets, 2) Antenatal clinics, 3) A national insurance plan, which would provide maternity grants, 4) Educational encouragement to get women to antenatal clinics and hospitals. 5) Back-up services for "problem" home deliveries, 6) Registered midwives with proper medical training, 7) Intensive (or even intermediate) neonatology facilities.

While Palestinians will continue to build up their own independent health care system incubator by incubator, it is doubtful they will have the financial freedom or resources to finish the job within this generation. What is clear is that neither the "iron hand" nor the "velvet glove" occupation policies of the Israelis ever differed over the agreed-upon aim of hindering the development of Palestinian society. With the present *status quo*, the odds now are completely stacked against Palestinian babies — even before they pass from the womb.

The Heroine in Arab Literature

Perhaps the foremost Arab writer on feminist issues, **Nawal al-Saadawi's** works have reached a wide and enthusiastic audience in the Arab world. Her analysis of the destructive role on women and society played by female myths and time-honoured traditional values such as "virginity" and "honour" have also won her imprisonment in Egypt and censorship by many other Arab regimes. The following has been excerpted from a chapter entitled "The Heroine in Arab Literature" from *The Hidden Face of Eve* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), Saadawi's only work available in English translation.

The image drawn of women by Arab writers and poets in more ancient times, but also in contemporary literature, does not differ except in details from that which has been depicted in the West. Whatever differences exist are mainly due to the changes in place and time, or some writers being more forwardlooking than others. Variations are superficial and in no way influence the essential picture of women who remain subjugated to men by the patriarchal system, whether in the context of an industrial society or in that of an agricultural setting, whether feudal or capitalist, retrograde or advanced, Eastern or Western, Christian or Muslim.

The content of art and literature essentially depends on a struggle intrinsic to the work. This struggle may end in success or in failure, but it is always a type of drama or tragedy that deserves to be told, to be described, and to be registered whether it be humorous or conducive to sadness, tragic or comic. Many are the incidents and strange situations in life that inspire tears and laughter at the same time.

One of the most important of these struggles is that which has gone on, and continues without respite, between man and woman, ever since the day when she was stripped of her natural and reasonable right to name her children and decide their descent. The struggle between man and woman began with the establishment of the patriarchal system and went on right through the ages to the present day. The male of the human species never lost his fear that one day woman would be victorious and regain the rights she had lost. The proof of his fear lies in the fetters and chains with which he has surrounded her body and mind, fetters and chains that take the form of strict and sanctified laws or scientific theories about her "self" and her psychology, or certain moral codes, or even emotions that take on the form of love and nobility and protection but whose real substance is made up of jealousy, acquisitiveness, domination and possessiveness. The proof of this almost obsessive fear is the fact that man has never given up the attempt to limit her freedom and to control every aspect of her life, sometimes in full consciousness of what he is doing and at others without even realising his own motives.

For the last five or six thousand years man has put all his capabilities and imagination into inventing a wide variety of bonds with which to encircle and pin down women. Yet, throughout, he has never been able to dispel this ingrained fear of the woman and the necessity he feels to watch her carefully. He was afraid of woman, afraid of the fact that she had this mysterious power to bear children and to give birth to them. It was not possible for him to rid his mind and his heart of a fear that he had carried within himself for millions of years.

The myth of Adam and Eve is the story of man's fear of woman. Were it not for this fear, no one would have thought of attributing evil, sin and deviltry to Eve. For the she devil is nothing but a living embodiment of man's innate fear.

Psychology emphasises the close link that exists in the psyche of the human being between fear and hatred. Fear indeed breeds hatred, and hatred in its turn is the sustenance of fear. They run together, and the continuity of one depends on the continuity of the other.

Freud admitted that man hates woman and that he envisages her as a source of danger.

If the fear of woman has left its imprint even on scientific thinking, the arts, and in particular literature, have also suffered from this deep-seated malady. Arab literature was therefore replete with women characters so full of cunning that man was in mortal danger if he approached them. They are depicted as adept at manipulating the arts of conspiracy, deceit and female seduction.

In Arab literature there have been many writers who were well-known for the deep-seated enmity and hatred they bore for women. Examples of these are al-Ma'ari, al-Akkad, and al-Hakim. Al-Akkad was described as the "arch enemy of woman" and his hatred for the female sex was clearly reflected in many of his writings, and surpassed in its intensity the cold-blooded enmity evinced by his master Schopenhauer. Al-Akkad described woman as remaining an overgrown child in all phases of her life, with many of the characteristics which in his opinion are usually associated with children such as rashness, immaturity of mind, a tendency to imitate others and to depend on them, to be fickle and capricious, and given to lies and hypocrisy. He believes that these characteristics are the vestiges of a natural savagery and primitiveness which the passage of thousands of years has not been able to mitigate or to refine.

But al-Akkad, almost in the same breath upholds diametrically opposed ideas. Under his pen we see this creature that has not come of age, this immature child, this passive hen transformed suddenly into a force more powerful than any other. It is in this light that he portrays woman in his novel *Sarah*. "She is the force by which all living things in the universe and in the human being express themselves." To the author this force is so powerful, crushing and unjust that it differs in no way from that of a tyrannical state. In one of his poems he expresses his feelings as follows:

My beloved, how cruelly unjust you are
And how great is my woe
Your empire is overpowering
But you utter not one word to explain.
The greatest tyranny a man can suffer
Is the tyranny which he himself allows.
You wound me to the depths
And yet I kiss the hand that holds the cutting edge.
The worst pain that a man can bear
Is the pain in whose hurt he finds pleasure and joy.

Here is an example of how hatred can turn into a love passion, into an unhealthy sentiment that finds pleasure in cruelty, injustice and pain, into masochistic love that accepts humiliation, and grovels and crawls and even kisses

Nawal Saadawi

the hand that inflicts punishment and plunges a dagger into the heart of the lover.

The masochistic Akkad, however, soon undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes a violent sadist, full of aggression against woman. A female for him must be harshly dominated by man. For his purpose he drew widely from the Quran and based himself on the passages that make men responsible for women and superior to them since with women it is not reason that controls their lives, nor a strength of will, and an incisiveness of opinion.

Among the male authors I have read, both in the West and in the Arab world, irrespective of the language in which they have written, or of the region from which they have come, not one has been able to free himself from this age-old image of women handed down to us from an ancient past, no matter how famous many of them have been for their passionate defence of human rights, human values and justice, and their vigorous resistance to oppression and tyranny in any form.

Akkad and other contemporary men of letters in the Arab world have not travelled very far from the positions held by their ancestors hundreds of years ago, nor does the image they paint of women differ much from the exotic curves of the slave women heroines in the "classic" *A Thousand and One Nights*. Woman continues to appear on the scene as a capricious vamp, a playful and beautiful slave, a she-devil imbued with cunning and capable of a thousand artifices, an explosive danger versed in all the arts of deceit and conspiracy, a seductive mistress captivating in her passion. She is as positive and dynamic as Satan and his evil spirits, wherever matters of sex and love are concerned. Woman in all the aspects of the role she is made to play, whether it be that of a queen or a slave bought from the market, remains a slave. She may be the daughter of a king, fighting with courage while her lover shivers in fear, yet she will always be made to call him master and to serve him, just as Mariam al-Zanaria placed herself at the service of Nour al-Din.

Yet Shawahi and many of the other women mentioned in these tales in fact reflect the strong and positive Arab woman personality, who used to participate unhesitatingly in politics and war, carry her sword and put on her shield and fight in the front lines of the battle field. Such a woman was Hind Bint Rabia, who killed a number of Mohammed's followers in the Battle of Ahad. That is why in *A Thousand and One Nights* a woman who fights is not portrayed as a Muslim but rather as an evil old witch or sorceress.

The woman spirit or genie occupies a prominent place in these tales which indicates that the power and strength of women remained an idea and a feeling deeply ingraind in the mind and emotions of the Arab peoples and continued to be linked with the supernatural powers of genies, devils, sorcery, *fitna* and sex. However, woman in modern Arab literature has not taken on both the form and the substance of these genies. She has discarded the form and kept the substance. She is therefore human on the outside like the others, but intrinsically she has remained a genie, imbued with the same fundamental nature that leads her to practise deceit, to betray, to conspire against others, and to seduce them into her traps. Thus she belongs much more to the world of genies and spirits than to the world of human beings.

Tawfiq al-Hakim has been given the title "enemy of woman." In this area he has contributed thoughts very similar to those of al-Akkad although they might differ in points of detail. In his story *Al Robat al-Moqadass* (The Sacred Bond), al-Hakim portrays a woman who rebels against her life. However this rebellion, according to the story, is not due to intellectual ambition or to a desire to do something worthwhile in her life but rather to fill the emotional vacuum with which circumstances have afflicted her. The intellectual in this story, who in fact represents the author, maintains that woman no longer has sufficient religious conviction or motives and that his role is to awaken her conscience and to bring her to realise what is fundamentally wrong. Hakim in his turn describes woman as a creature who bears no loyalty or fidelity except to her "baser instincts" and physical desires, and who behaves very much like Akkad's heroine, Sarah, taking not the slightest account of religious, intellectual or social values.

Arab literature also reflects the concept of honour as related to virginity. In fact this concept has not progressed much from its earliest, most primitive and absurd forms. In his novel, *Do'a al-Karawan*, Taha Hussein describes this conventional attitude towards honour. The little girl, Hanadi, is slaughtered like a sheep by her maternal uncle, aided and abetted by the mother whom the author portrays as so weak that she is unable to protect her daughter and even participates with the uncle in the killing. The uncle goes scot free, and nowhere is he looked upon as a criminal but rather as a man worthy of respect for defending the honour of his family. The young

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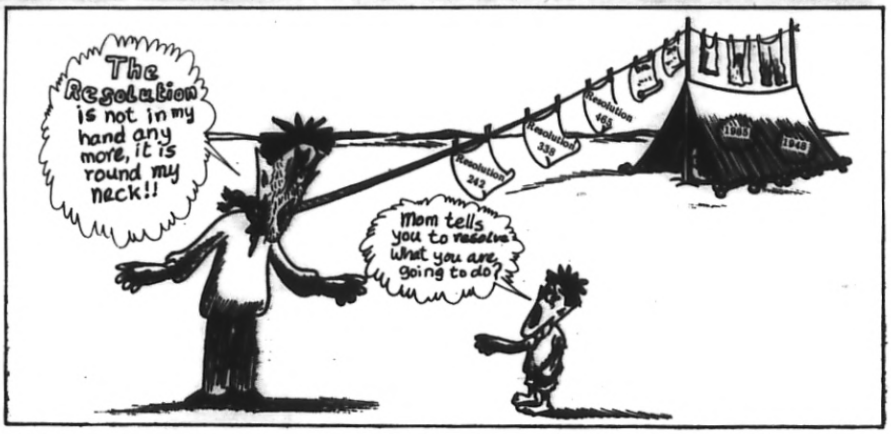
WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS


The Resolution is not in my hand any more, it is round my neck!!
Mom tells you to resolve what you are going to do?
Resolution 242
Resolution 338
Resolution 425
1948
1967

Debate over the controversial Egyptian initiative, the Israeli decision to withdraw from Lebanon and the military closure of Bir Zeit University were the main stories published in the occupied territories this week.

With varying levels of enthusiasm and rejection, local Palestinian papers used their lead stories and editorials to express their respective positions. For the most part, *Al Quds* and *Al Fajr* appeared to be cautiously supportive of Mubarak's initiative while *Al Sha'ab*, *Al Mithaq* and *Al Talia* strongly opposed it.

The Israeli cabinet approval of the second stage of withdrawal from Lebanon, amidst continued resistance and the oppressive crackdown of the Israeli army in the south, was also featured in the local papers.

Locally, news about the Israeli army's break-in and search of both the old and the new campuses of Bir Zeit University and the one-week closure that followed was given prominence. Notices denouncing the closure and rejecting Israeli claims about materials found in the students' exhibit were also published.

If the Inalienables' Are Put to the Test

If the "inalienables" are really so, then the natural reply to Mubarak's initiative should be outright rejection by the PLO official leadership and its supporters. And indeed, Abu Iyad rejected it without the need to wait for "meetings" to study the plan. Abu Iyad's statements do not exempt the leadership of his movement from the need to immediately reject the plan.

Mubarak's plan is right in line with the understanding of Menachem Begin and some Israeli, American and Arab circles... ie, a call for Jordan to join Camp David and to deprive the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and to an independent state.

Rejection of Mubarak's plan is a test of the sincerity of adherence to the Palestinian inalienables as declared by the official PLO leadership.

AL TALIA
February 28

The Future of the Peace Efforts

Intensive secret Egyptian-Israeli contacts during the past few days indicate that both sides look seriously at the initiative presented by Mubarak. But despite the declared welcome in Israel, there is still a gap between the Egyptian and Israeli positions, and differences are quite evident.

The Egyptian initiative is a compromise between the Arab position calling for PLO participation and the Israeli position insistent on ignoring the PLO. But the two sides have not yet agreed on who is going to represent the Palestinians or who will choose the Palestinian members to the joint delegation.

It is still premature to say that talks will begin soon because the PLO and Jordan have not taken an official stand on the Egyptian initiative. Hopes for a breakthrough are like a building founded on moving sands. Future developments will decide the direction of the peace process.

AL QUDS
March 1

The Basic Task

Palestinian officials and spokespersons renewed their adherence to Palestinian positions, thus rejecting the Mubarak initiative. We believe that all Palestinians should rally round the Palestinian position as expressed by the last statement issued by the PLO Executive Committee. Rallying round this position is the only way to abort all attempts to reduce the PLO's role.

Arab nationalist countries should continue their role in helping the Palestinians. We are sure the masses of our people are able to protect the cause and their rights.

AL SHA'AB
March 1

Palestinian Legitimacy

Palestinian official sources did not deny the existence of differences over the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement. They also did not deny the right of all to constructive criticism, provided it be practised through legitimate Palestinian institutions. This position was stressed by PLO spokesperson Ahmad Abd al-Rahman. On the basis of this position we interpret the Egyptian initiative.

But we noticed that those who rejected the Amman agreement are now rejecting the Egyptian initiative on the basis of their continued efforts to strike against the PLO, while pretending they are worried over its fate. We would like to assure all these people that the PLO, under Arafat's leadership, is capable of confronting all challenges.

The 17th PNC session resolutions are crystal clear. The Amman agreement is also very clear. Perhaps the Egyptian initiative has become clear at last We have to deal with any new political moves through Palestinian resolutions. We also realise the importance of a decisive Palestinian stand to put an end to all differences.

AL FAJR
March 1

The Best There Is

During the past few days the Middle East has witnessed intensive moves, beginning with the Amman agreement and followed by Mubarak's initiative, many aspects of which are still vague.

Despite all these moves, the fact is that the PLO is an integral part of any peaceful solution in the Middle East. The PLO is the only framework through which the Palestinian people can effectively participate in a just and lasting peace.

The Amman agreement asserted this when it proposed an international conference to be attended by all parties. The most that we could hope for is a joint delegation comprising Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and the PLO. It can in no way be construed as authorisation or delegation.

Therefore, the US-Israeli attitude is the main obstacle to peace because they reject the idea of an international conference and object to any PLO participation.

For anyone who wants peace, the Amman agreement serves as the best there is for achieving this sacred objective.

AL QUDS
March 2

The Bottom Line

The bet of some that the PLO can be drawn to the American solutions have failed. Some thought the PLO, following the departure from Beirut, had become vulnerable to the influence of those who advocate a revised version of Camp David.

But the PLO rejected Mubarak's initiative, which ignored the PLO's role and tried to place all the cards in the hands of the US.

The bets of those incited by Syria have also failed.

AL SHA'AB
March 2

New European Initiative

In a statement to the Gulf paper *Al Ittihad*, the Greek minister of state for foreign affairs disclosed a new European initiative to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is based on three principles:

* Establishment of a Palestinian state.

* The withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem

* The provision of international guarantees for the secure borders of all states in the Middle East.

The minister pointed out that the EEC countries did not reject the initiative when presented by the Greek prime minister last December.

Although the European initiative is capable of solving the problem, there must still be an international conference attended by all concerned parties.

AL FAJR
March 2

The Fate of the Peace Initiatives

Much of what happens in the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian cause in particular depends upon the US attitude toward the many initiatives presented — be they of Arab, European, Soviet or even American origin.

This does not mean going back to the same allegation that the US has 99 percent of the cards. Even if this were true, the US does not have most of the cards if it is not willing to use them to pressure Israel. The Arabs cannot entrust a state with the role of being an objective mediator if that state has so much leverage on Israel and yet refuses to use any of the means available to it.

It is true the US has many cards and most of them are the result of Arab weakness, division and paralysis. Yet the US uses all these means to support Israel.

The Jordanian-Palestinian agreement aimed at containing the American objections and "no's" established by Henry Kissinger in the mid-70's. He based US policy on: "No negotiation with and no recognition of the PLO, unless it recognises 242 and Israel." Within this context, the Egyptian initiative was presented with the aim of keeping the cause in the limelight. Yet this initiative or any others will lead nowhere unless the US and Israel change their positions.

AL QUDS
March 4

March 8 — International Women's Day

Bazaar: sponsored by the *Women's Work Committee* at the Arab Chamber of Commerce, East Jerusalem. 9:00 — 12:00 pm.

Festival: sponsored by the *Women's Work Committee* at the Al-Hambra Cinema, East Jerusalem. 1:00 pm, tickets IS500.

Festival: sponsored by the *Working Women's Committee* at the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem. 3:00 pm.

Other festivals take place in Jericho, Bethlehem and Ramallah.

Other Events

Lecture series: "*Ways of Caring for Mentally Handicapped Children*, sponsored by and held at the Swedish Relief Agency, Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem. 2:00 pm.

Samaritan Folklore Exhibit: sponsored by the *Samaritan Youth Club*, Nablus. Exhibit continues till March 17. 9:00 am — 8:00 pm.

March 9

Exhibit: sponsored by the *Working Women's Committee* at the Arab Chamber of Commerce, East Jerusalem. Exhibit runs until March 11.

Drama: "*The Immigrant*," presented by the Theatre Arts Company at Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem. 7:00 pm. (Arabic)

March 10

Film and Lectures: sponsored by the Working Women's Committee of Ramallah — exact time and location to be announced at the March 8 festival at the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre (see above).

Drama: "*The Immigrants*," presented by the Theatre Arts Company at Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem. 7:00 pm. (Arabic)

March 14

Lecture: "*The Interfaith Dimension as a Contributory Factor in Christian-Jewish dialogue*," by Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, at the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research (Tantur), Bethlehem Road. 4:30 pm.

Drama: "*Festival*," presented by Sanabel Theatre at the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem. Tickets IS1500. 7:00 pm. (Arabic)

March 15

Exhibit: sponsored by the *Working Women's Committee* in Nablus, until March 17, and in Ramallah, until March 16.

Drama: "*Festival*," presented by Sanabel Theatre at the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem. Tickets IS1500. 7:00 pm. (Arabic)

Asqalan

continued from page 2

she has written prison officials several times explaining the water problem and received promises to fix it. She added that nothing, however, has been done.

The prisoners' list also included demands to furnish the prison with a dining room and to reorganise family visits, which are permitted once every two weeks, into two shifts. Prisoners say that since there is only one day for family visits every two weeks, some families have to wait all day for their turn.

The prisoners' strike has reportedly triggered solidarity strikes and protests among their families.

In Gaza, more than 50 women and men, all relatives of political prisoners, started an open sit-in strike at the Red Cross offices demanding prompt investigation to ensure a positive response to the prisoners' demands so the strike could be be ended quickly. Another sit-in was initiated by prisoners' families at the Jerusalem offices of the Red Cross, March 6. More than 30 men and women are holding an open strike at the ICRC office in solidarity with their prisoner relatives.

Mohammed Shamasneh, 80

One year has passed since the death of the popular poet Mohammed Issa Shamasneh, 80. Shamasneh was prominent in the 1936 revolution and was imprisoned several times.

His son, Ayoub Shamasneh, mourned him:

In eyes' tears we lament you,
In heart's blood we
commemorate you.
My pen is unable to express my
great pain.
I am very sad.

Ayoub Shamasneh.

Heroine

continued from page 11

engineer who is responsible for having sullied Hanadi's honour also escapes punishment and at the end of the novel is rewarded with the love of the victim's sister, Amna.

Woman in the literary works of Naguib Mahfouz, perhaps the most well-known of contemporary Egyptian writers, remains "a woman" whether poor or rich, ignorant or cultured. Throughout, she is fundamentally the same since her honour does not go further than an intact hymen and a chaste sexual life. In most cases, her downfall and the loss of her honour are brought about by poverty. This is perhaps a step forward since, before Naguib Mahfouz, male authors always brought about the perdition of their heroines through their baser instincts, their passions (in the sense of sexual desire), their female weakness, or the fact that they lacked a mind or brain.

Although Naguib Mahfouz is progressive in so far as his views on social justice are concerned, his attitude and concepts in relation to woman do not differ much from those of his predecessors. He permitted her the right to education and work in support of the father or husband and as a contribution to the income of the family, on condition that she did not overstep the limits of morals and religion (morals in the sense of the patriarchal family), and the double standard prevalent in society where a man and a woman join in love or intercourse, but where it is only the woman who is considered as having fallen or been dishonoured.

Separation between love and marriage was one of the results of a concept inherited from the distant past that glorified *al hob al-ozri* or romantic love, and that considered marriage, of which sex is a part, as relatively sinful. This led to the division of women into two categories: the female characterised by seductiveness and sexual passion, and the mother — pure, virtuous, virgin, devoid of sex or passion.

Arab literature is threaded throughout with innumerable examples of these two opposing and contradictory categories of women. The mother symbolises a great and noble love, whereas the female symbolises a degraded kind of love. The sacred respect in which Arab men hold their mothers appears clearly in songs, poems, novels and culture.

Most heroines' hope in life is to legitimise their existence through marriage. The woman's world is limited to thinking of men and dreaming of husband. After marriage, a woman is solely occupied with the art of keeping her husband. The mother trains her daughter to perfect this art and says to her: "You must be a new woman to him every day, a woman who is challenging, tempting and seductive."

The man who marries a working woman, one with a strong personality and who is self-confident, is looked upon as being weak and dominated by his wife. He is depicted as having opposed his mother who always warned him against allowing his wife to go out to work. Naguib Mahfouz describes this husband as being a failure because he is leading a life in which decisions rest with the wife who has the upper hand.

For man, the feminine woman represents danger and an ancient fear, both related to sex. He therefore wishes her to be pure like his mother, in other words not a female, and as passive and weak as an angle child. At the same time he harbours a burning desire for the female. Her seductiveness and her charms captivate him, yet he is afraid of these qualities because when faced by them his resistance collapses.

Most contemporary Arab writers manifest an undisguised hatred towards bold and emancipated women.

Most stories and novels depict the conservative type of man, overcome with repulsion when faced with an educated woman who mixes freely and dances with men. Yet, at the same time, he is overcome by an equal if not greater repulsion when in the presence of a woman whose face is hidden behind a veil or who comes from a poor family and is liable to be led astray because of her poverty. The educated emancipated woman, however, falls lower than any other in his eyes just because she is liberated. Torn on all sides by these conflicting forces, his defences completely collapse and he ends up in a state of confusion: "He felt as though everything had collapsed around him, and struck out blindly on to the road, like one who was lost. Deep down inside of him was the feeling of being surrounded by a strange and alien world."

Arab men are becoming more and more insecure and confused with the increasing number of women seeking, and finding, employment outside the home and participating actively in the life of society. This movement away from domestic imprisonment has taken on momentum, especially after the spread of socialist ideas to the Arab countries. Arab literature has started to reflect this growing tendency and the conflicts and problems arising from it. Men tend to support the idea of women seeking a career or a job, and looking for work in order to earn money; but for them this remains simply a help in shouldering the financial responsibilities of the family, and ought to be only a secondary function for the wife whose main role is to look after her husband and children. The ideal woman in novels is still the beautiful, quietly angelic and obedient female, who does not show any particular boldness or ambition. A woman with courage or ambition, with eyes wide open, and who shows audacity and strength, is still considered ugly, repulsive, coarse and vulgar.

Arab writers have therefore borrowed from the categorisation of women institutionalised by the patriarchal system. For, in this system, a woman belongs either to the category which is composed of sacred pure mothers and frigid, chaste, respectable wives, or to that which groups together the prostitute and the mistress, women who are warm, pulsating, seductive, but despised.

Naguib Mahfouz tried to use sexual aggression against women as a symbol of aggression against a nation or people. On the very same night that Yassin chooses to violate his wife's black girl servant, the father forces their neighbour, Um Mariam, to sleep with him, while the British troops march into the district of Cairo in which he lives. But despite this symbolism, at the individual level the honour and integrity of women remains for Naguib Mahfouz a totally different thing to that of men. The honour of women is preserved or lost depending upon the type of sexual relations which they have with men, rather than on the other aspects of their life.

It is ironic, then, that the woman prostitute plays a much more important role in Arabic literature than that which is accorded to the pure and virtuous woman. It is as though purity and virtue are not attractive enough to evoke interest, whether in real life or in the stories of men and women conjured up by an artist's imagination. The prostitute seems to symbolise real woman, woman without a veil or a mask. She is real woman for she has lifted the mask of deceit from the face and no longer feels a need to pretend that she is in love, or to simulate virtue and devotion.

Understanding of their situation has not moved from a superficial analysis of their social conditions to a deep and sensitive realisation of the tragedy women are made to live, or a profound understanding of the real factors that have made them victims of unrelenting injustice.

Arab authors and men of letters, whether in the past or in the present, have not been able to penetrate the crucial area of sexual and moral tragedy in the life of women, and have therefore been incapable of expressing anything really worthwhile on the subject.

WEEKLY REVIEW

The roadblock at the main road to Bir Zeit University. The university was closed for a week after soldiers raided a book fair on campus./AFP photo

February 26, 1985

AMERICAN DELEGATION VISITS NAJAH

NABLUS — An American delegation of 22 journalists, academics, and businessmen visited Najah University in Nablus as part of a tour of the occupied territories. They met with university officials who briefed them on the situation at the university.

February 27, 1985

LONG TIME PRISONER RELEASED

JERUSALEM — The Israeli authorities released Samir Daoud Abu Diab, 36, of Jerusalem after he completed a 16-year prison sentence on charges of membership in a Palestinian organisation, possession of weapons, and distributing anti-Israeli leaflets.

Diab's house was demolished in 1969 soon after his arrest.

ENGINEER JAILED

GAZA — Gaza military court sentenced engineer Yousef Ahmad Awad Ashour, 25, from the village of Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip, to nine months in prison and one year suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organisation and weapons training in 1980.

GAZA WOMAN JAILED

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Fatmeh Mustafa al-Firi of Gaza to one-and-a-half years in prison. She was convicted on security charges.

GAZA WOMEN STRIKE AT RED CROSS

About 30 Palestinian women have been on a sit-in strike at the Red Cross offices in Gaza for two days to express solidarity with their sons who are detained at Asqalan prison and who have been on hunger-strike for two weeks.

February 28, 1985

JABALYA EXPLOSION

GAZA — An explosives device went off in Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday night injuring one person, Israel Radio reported.

The radio reported that the explosion occurred when Ahmad Abd al-Qader was preparing the device. He lost some of his fingers in the explosion, the report said.

HUNGER STRIKE AT ASQALAN

ASQALAN — Palestinian political prisoners at Asqalan prison have begun an indefinite hunger strike to protest bad conditions and maltreatment in the prison.

TIME BOMB FOUND

TULKARM — Israeli troops found and safely detonated a time bomb attached to the building of the Tulkarm military headquarters. No injuries were reported.

STONE OVERTURNS VEHICLE

BETHLEHEM — Israel Radio said an Israeli vehicle was stoned as it was travelling in the Bethlehem area. The driver lost control of the vehicle which overturned on the roadside, the radio said. Israeli troops sealed off the area and launched a search for the attackers.

DIDN'T HALT ON ORDERS

NABLUS — A scuffle between an army patrol and three local residents ended with one soldier and one Nablus resident wounded, according to a report on Israel Radio. The three had ignored orders to halt and this led to a fight, the report said.

SYMPOSIUM

JERUSALEM — A symposium on the *status quo* and the Mubarak initiative was held at the al-Ibrahimiyeh College in East Jerusalem.

Student representatives who spoke at the symposium rejected the Mubarak initiative, saying it contravened the PLO's political programmes. They called for preserving PLO unity.

PETROL BOMB EXPLODES

RAMALLAH — A petrol bomb was thrown into a restaurant in the centre of Ramallah, Israel Radio said. The bomb exploded causing no damage, but no other details were given about the incident.

TEACHER DISMISSED

DHAHRIYAH — The Israeli officer in charge of education and culture in the Civil Administration has decided to dismiss Mohammed Abu Hashash, a teacher from the village of Dhahriyah in the Hebron district.

Hashash, who taught Arabic language at the Abu Ubeidah Elementary School, was appointed to his job on October 1, 1984. No reasons were given for the dismissal.

15-YEAR-OLD GETS 4 MONTHS

DURA — The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Walid Mohammed Issa Ali Am'r, 15, from the village of Dura in the Hebron district, to four months in prison, eight months suspended and a fine of IS75,000 on security charges.

NABLUS YOUTHS JAILED

NABLUS — The Israeli military court here sentenced Nasser Abu Thabet and Taysir al-Asi, both from Nablus, to six months in prison and three months suspended on security charges.

The court also sentenced Abdullah Mahmoud Bashir of Jemsafout village to two-and-a-half years in prison and six months suspended on similar charges.

March 1, 1985

FARMERS ORDERED TO DESTROY TREES

TULKARM — The military governor of Tulkarm has ordered landowners to cut down the olive and almond trees on their property, where passing telephone lines were recently set on fire.

RESIDENTS ERECT ROADBLOCKS

NABLUS — Israeli troops sealed off the commercial centre in Nablus after local youths burned tires, erected make-shift roadblocks, and hurled stones at army vehicles. The troops also closed al-Shuweitara Street in Nablus after stones were thrown at army vehicles.

Israeli soldiers arresting an Arab student at Hebrew University during a demonstration against MK Meir Kahane's presence on campus./RI photo

March 2, 1985

FARMER SHOT

NABLUS — A 60-year-old Nablus man was wounded when an unidentified gunman fired three shots at him as he was working on his land, east of the village of Deir Tal in the Nablus district.

Abd al-Qader Isma'il was wounded in his left arm and taken to hospital. He was reported to be in stable condition.

March 3, 1985

SUSPICIOUS OBJECT EXPLODED

JERUSALEM — A suspicious object found at Damascus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem was exploded by Israeli police sappers. No injuries were reported.

100 DEMOLITION THREATS

BEIT LAHIA — Representatives of 65 families from the village of Beit Lahia in the Gaza Strip have been notified by the Israelis that 100 houses will be demolished. Electricity and water supplies will be cut off beforehand.

PLP DELEGATION VISITS HEBRON

HEBRON — A delegation from the Progressive List for Peace (PLP) visited Hebron and met with ousted Mayor Mustafa Abd al-Nabi Natshe, members of the elected municipal council and members of the Qawasmeh family.

The 50-man delegation was led by MK Mohammed Mi'ari, head of the PLP

ISRAELI BUS STONED

SHU'FAT — An Israeli Egged bus travelling through Shu fat refugee camp north of Jerusalem was stoned and its windows

smashed. A 16-year-old girl was injured and taken to hospital for treatment.

YOUTHS JAILED

TULKARM — An Israeli military court in Tulkarm sentenced Wasef Mohammed Hamed to two-and-a-half years in prison and another two-and-a-half years suspended on security charges.

The court also sentenced Jamal Kayed Harb and Othman Mustfa Karsu to one-and-a-half years in prison and a similar suspended sentence on the same charges.

The three are all residents of Tulkarm refugee camp.

SHA'WA TO AMMAN

GAZA — Elected Mayor Rashad Shawwa of Gaza left for Amman today. From there he will continue on to France and Britain.

GAZA TRADE WITH WEST BANK REALLOWED

GAZA — Israeli military authorities have lifted the export ban on vegetables from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank except for potatoes. The ban had been in effect for the last five months

March 4, 1985

CURFEW FOLLOWS STONING

HALHOUL — Israeli troops clamped a curfew on the village of Halhoul in the Hebron district after an Israeli vehicle passing on the main Halhoul road was stoned and two passengers were injured.

ISRAELI CAR STONED

BALATA — An Israeli vehicle passing the Balata refugee camp near Nablus was stoned, but no injuries were reported.

YOUTHS JAILED

DURA — Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced two young men from Dura village in the Hebron district to two years in prison and two years suspended on security charges. The two are Nabih Jubran al-Rajub and Abd al-Hadi al-Amayreh.

March 5, 1985

MILHEM SUCCEEDS QAWSMEH

Mohammed Milhem, member of the PLO Executive Committee, has been appointed to head the Department of Occupied Territories Affairs in the PLO. He succeeded the former head of this department and member of the PLO Executive Committee Fahd al-Qawasmeh, who was assassinated in Amman last December.

GAZA U. MELEE LEAVES SEVERAL INJURED

GAZA — Studies were suspended at the Islamic University in Gaza after a fight broke out on campus between rival student factions. A number of students were injured in the scuffle and taken to hospital.

Israeli troops detained about 20 students for interrogation.

The home of Issawiyeh resident Nimr Abed Mohammed, demolished March 6, 1985. The home of resident Munir Ilayan was also levelled./BA photo

CALL TO STOP DEMOLITION OF HOUSES

BEIT LAHIYEH — MK Matityahu Peled of the Progressive List for Peace (PLP) has requested Minister Without Portfolio Ezer Weizman to interfere with the government to prevent the demolition of 65 Arab houses in Beit Lahiyeh village in the Gaza Strip.

DOCTOR'S TRIP TO JORDAN BANNED

HEBRON — Israel has prohibited Doctor Khaled al-Za'tari of Hebron from travelling to Jordan to attend the fourth Jordanian Medical Conference which opened in Amman today.

STUDENT ACTIVIST JAILED

An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Ghazi Abu Hananeh of Arrabeh village in the Jenin district to five months in prison and five months suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organisation.

Abu Hananeh is a former deputy head of the Palestinian Students Union in Khartoum.

SHAWWA MEETS MITTERAND

PARIS — The French minister of external affairs received the deposed mayor of Gaza, Haj Rashad al-Shawwa, and discussed with him the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

Shawwa later met with French President Francois Mitterand.

BEIT JALA MAYOR RETURNS HOME

BEIT JALA — The mayor of Beit Jala, Farah al-A'araj, returned home from a four-day visit to Jordan during which he discussed issues concerning the municipality with Jordanian officials.

Al-A'araj brought with him JD60,000 for town projects.

Straitjacket

continued from page 16

talking about boys and TV programmes. She cannot answer the question of why she voluntarily left school. She shrugs her shoulders, looks at her friends and laughs.

Only three families from Beit Dahab have sent their daughters to the only girl's secondary school in the area, a 15-minute bus ride away from the village. Zubeidah had this freedom but preferred to stay with her friends and pursue her ambition of early marriage and family.

Ibtisam, on the other hand, has been out of school for two straight years. Her father refused to allow her to attend even the preparatory school in her own village, despite her begging and appeals by those outside the family. Her elder sister, Najwa, was married at 15 and has eight children at the age of 28. Ibtisam's father looks to her as a role model for his younger daughter. Ibtisam clicks her tongue to her teeth and looks away at the idea of following in Najwa's heavy footsteps. She will try with her father again next school year, she says, taking no mind that she will be two years older than her classmates. In the meantime, she learns to sew. It is

respectable and allows her to do something on her own, to learn a useful skill and to have contact with girls her age in similar predicaments.

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Zeinab stays in her house most of the time, caring for the youngest crop of her seven children. She looks at visitors out of the haziness of her left eye. She lost the sight of her right eye several years ago. Her mobility is further reduced by the seven-month bulge below her stomach. Yet she is heating water, bathing her babies in turn, pulling on their clean clothes and combing hair while she speaks.

She has been faced with a cruel choice: an eye specialist visiting the once-a-week clinic in the village told Zeinab she will lose the sight in her left eye as well unless she gets weekly treatment at the opthalmic hospital in Jerusalem. Zeinab's husband, a worker in an Israeli factory, refuses to allow her to go. He is intent on marrying another wife, Zeinab says, and a first wife who has gone blind is an excuse which few would dispute. He has threatened to divorce her outright if she "disobeys" him. Zeinab does not dispute his traditional "right" to take a second, younger, wife but she is angry and desperate about having her eyesight literally stolen from her. Most of all she worries who would take care of her children when her husband is busy with a second family.

Zeinab and her husband are cousins and Zeinab's sister is married to his brother. Despite the closeness of the families and their sympathy for Zeinab, no one has been able to forcefully intervene with her husband and his ultimate right to control or jettison his wife.

Two months had already elapsed since a physician last checked Zeinab's eyes. During this time she had painfully decided — but not yet acted — to make the trip to Jerusalem, accompanied by an older village woman who also needed treatment but could not negotiate the trip herself. Her sister would care for her children in her absence. Zeinab had come to the conclusion that divorce and dispossession — as disgraceful as it was — could not be worse for her and her family than such a permanent disability.

He could punish her as he saw fit, she had decided, and she would deal with the consequences — even if it meant leaving the village, and the West Bank, to live with her parents in Amman.

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Beit Dahab's kindergarten is one small room, unheated and crowded with all sizes of children, some of whom look like they should be in elementary school. The pre-school is the result of long efforts by a few concerned people in the village, and is supported financially by an outside charity. It is only a few years old but it has been a great success for children and mothers alike. The children are happy to be learning, singing, counting, discovering the alphabet, eating labneh sandwiches.

The mothers are grateful that their children will have a headstart when they begin elementary school, that they have something constructive to do during the day, and that there is one less child to worry about for a few hours. Already there are noticeably more rough-housing boys than observant girls sitting at the chairs and desks which completely fill the room. The young woman who is their teacher is keen to show the girls equal attention as they all chant their morning verse in unison.

** all facts are true except the name of the village.*
*** not a real name.*

The Straitjacket of Sex and Class

by Flavia Pesa

Much has been written, and hidden, by the notion of the preeminence of the nationalist struggle. Palestinian feminists acknowledge the immediateness of the need to overthrow foreign occupation. But they have never meant by this that traditional forms of oppression should be defended simply because they are symbols of the Palestinian *status quo* which is under attack by occupation. The false romanticisation of rural life puts an unfair burden on Palestinian women, and forces her not only *not* to resist social and economic strictures, but even to embrace them as

evidence of her Palestinian identity. Some observers have argued that the pressure of life in the occupied territories has actually deteriorated the status of women even faster than the rest of her society, despite her rising consciousness and progressive efforts.

Women's labour has always been crucial to the Palestinian economy. But where once women shared in the agricultural work with the men in the fields and home — the hard work of planting, harvesting and preserving food by hand — the proletarianisation of primarily the men has spelled sharp changes in the lives of village women.

Although Israeli official statistics indicate that 16 percent of the labour force under occupation works in Israel (in fact the figure is two to three times this), this migrant pool can exist on substandard wages only because of the non-cash labour performed in villages by the wives and daughters of commuting workers. The efforts of these working-at-home women accelerate when their lives are further complicated by the immigration of traditional heads of families for work abroad. And with the increase in work and responsibility, and in many cases decrease in resources, a woman's problems can multiply.

In villages, where patriarchal as well as class society can rule unameliorated and in isolation, a woman who fights oppression imposed by father, brother or husband — for her own survival or that of her children — can face alienation, and social disgrace. Sometimes she wins, especially if she gains the alliance of mother, relatives and "outside interveners": religious courts, social workers, whole families. Most often she feels overwhelmed by the oppressive systems operating against her. Palestinian women, in addition, have no national institutions to resort to, no government to appeal to, no fixed social equality. Progress, for her, has necessarily been a one-woman road.

Local women's organisations have addressed themselves to providing women with economic, political and social alternatives, to decreasing rural isolation, to increasing women's productivity potential, to raising consciousness and freeing women from a permanent life of childcare. But their ability — and even desire at this stage in their development — to penetrate and confront the venerable male dominions of traditional family power are extremely limited.

Village women who have violated staid social norms have done so because their personal experiences have radicalised them. *Al Fajr's* **Flavia Pesa** visited several Ramallah area villages and wrote the following portraits of some women who are unlikely newspaper subjects but who can express the compounded problems of women living under occupation, as well as in the straitjacket of a male-dominated and class-dominated society.

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Um Amjad of Beit Loofa * is not a journalistic composite but a real woman, the mother of four. Her youngest is Ammar, now in first grade. He has never seen his father, who left for California six years ago, trading in factory job in Israel to work in a shop in "Amerika." He has not returned nor sent money to his village-bound wife, whom he formally divorced, or to the children he left behind in Beit Loofa. Even her husband's extended family was little help to Um Amjad, since they lived in Jerusalem and outside the social pressure of the village.

For Um Amjad, however, these dire circumstances allowed her to change her life and to guarantee that she herself could provide for her children's future. It took Um Amjad several years to work out her financial situation. During this time she raised her young family and sent them all to school on a JD30 monthly stipend from Abu Amjad's family. Herself married at 15, with only a sixth-grade education, Um Amjad appealed to the Islamic Sharia court for her rights as a divorced woman to a monthly stipend for each of her children. Because her case was a clear-cut one for the religious courts, she won her compensation rights and now receives JD45 for her children from their paternal relatives. In addition she earns a JD30 salary for cooking, serving and cleaning four days a week at a hot-meal programme run by Lutheran and Catholic social relief organisations in her own and a neighbouring village.

Um Amjad is young and eager and, luckily for her, was not taken out of school for marriage before she could read and write. With the encouragement of her schoolteacher brother, who lives in Beit Loofa with his nine-member family, she is now taking nine months at a city training hospital as a practical midwife. There are three midwives already in the village but all are over 50-years-old and have never had formal training in antenatal care. Depending on the financial situation of the mother, Um Amjad can earn from JD10-15 for every child she helps birth.

Um Amjad says she wants to be sure her children, especially her only daughter, nine-year-old Hanan, complete their education — father, or no father.

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Um Said's story is shorter. She is waiting — waiting for Said, her eldest son, to return to the West Bank as a physician and earn the money which will support the family. He left 10 years ago to Algeria: the family investment.

No one in Said's family is working. Abu Said has been ill for some time and can no longer commute to the Israeli factories. The youngest of the six children is four-years-old. Um Said cannot read or write; she has a tired look and waits for Said to return, hoping it will be soon. But his return is not a certainty for many reasons. With 200 physicians unemployed in the West Bank he may find it financially wiser to remain abroad. Or he may have difficulty crossing the Jordan bridge: renewing his Jordanian passport, passing the Jordanian military authorities, receiving his residency papers from the Israeli occupation authorities and "permission" from them to return to his homeland. Anything could go wrong.

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A woman comes to the village clinic on the one day of the week it is open and appeals for an effective birth control. Her husband has been mentally retarded since birth; they have two sons and four daughters. Yet no physician will perform a tubal ligation without his consent. The clinic suggests an IUD, even though it brings an unnecessary health risk for someone who is interested not in spacing children but in permanently preventing future pregnancies. The women is only 28-years-old and can expect to have to use IUD's for the next 15-20 years.

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Fairuz's baby weighed only 1.8 kilogrammes at birth, and 10 days later showed all the signs of marasmus — a frighteningly common condition of malnutrition in the villages. Fairuz cradles her first-born, warm under 10 layers of blankets and garments, and stares with wide green eyes at the nurse who has visited her, wondering how to keep her baby, with the characteristic old-man face of marasmus, alive.

Fairuz's neighbours and mother-in-law sit cross-legged on mats next to her, wondering the same question. The baby has gained no weight but her sucking reflex is good and her mother is eager to nurse her at every opportunity — good signs. Fairuz delivered her baby in Hospice Hospital in Jerusalem's Old City; she has a Jerusalem ID and only had to pay IS15,000 at the government-run hospital (the Israeli health ministry is trying to force the closure of the facility, after depriving it of funds and improvements for years). But the new mother had no antenatal care until the seventh month of her pregnancy when albumin, protein, was detected in her first routine urinalysis. The protein signals preeclampsia, a potentially dangerous condition for a woman and fetus alike, which must be carefully monitored by a physician before, during and after delivery. She should have received regular check-ups but said she had no one to accompany her to the doctor's. Fairuz spent five days in hospital. She told the nurse her baby was not kept in an incubator, despite its low birth weight. She was told, apparently for the first time, to stick to a high fluid, high protein, low fat diet — and to rest — to help her baby.

The mother-in-law, for whom the baby was named, said she was thinking of her own son when he was a child. He had a mysterious fever, she said, which left him paralysed. This son, baby Amneh's father, left for "Amerika" six months before the birth of his malnourished daughter, and is staying with a brother while he "seeks treatment" for his paralysis.

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Ibtisam and Zubeidah are close in age and from the same village of Beit Dahab ** but they are not close in thought. Ibtisam has dimpled cheeks which she tries to hide, thick twin braids and answers questions quickly and in as positive a manner as she can muster. Zubeidah sits laconically on a stone wall with her two friends, outside the sewing class which they all share. She is tall and slender, made more regal by her crest of head scarf and long, tailored coat of religious uniform. Zubeidah stopped going to school the year before her *tawjihi* (matriculation) year and now spends her time sewing and knitting clothes for herself and

continued on page 15